Fundamentals of the CHRISTIAN FAITH in the Light of the Gospels

by

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I feel indebted to Mirza Masum Beg who very kindly undertook to render the Urdu original into English.

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FOREWORD

SPEAKING of the Gospel of Jesus, God confirms in the Holy Qur'an that it was revealed by Him (iii. 3), and that Jesus was His apostle (iv. 171), and a true and righteous servant; and (xix. 30) speaking of his mother, Mary, God testifies that she was a chaste and pure woman (xxi. 91; lxvi. 12). These Divine declarations were intended to absolve and acquit both Mary and Jesus of the disgraceful charges which the Jews had levelled against them. These obscene and contemptuous charges had lacerated and rent the hearts of the Christians; and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) who always stood for and supported truth, finding the Christians a target of tyranny and oppression, made up his mind to help them. The Christians had their abode at Najran, a place far-flung from Medina, and were helpless and weak, whereas the Jews who were much superior to the Christians in knowledge, wealth and number, lived in Medina along with the Holy Prophet. To stand by the weak, which was bound to provoke the wrath of the stronger nation, was certainly no small or easy task. The so-called civilised nations of the

twentieth century have nothing to do with the righteousness of a cause, nor do they cherish any respect or regard for fairplay and justice in favour of a weaker people subjected to oppression. On the contrary, they would stand up to support the aggression of a stronger nation to gain their selfish ends; the weeping and wailing of a weaker people, even though they may be in the right, does not excite in them any feeling of sympathy. But the Holy Prophet, who always stressed the adoption of righteousness and truth and maintenance of equity and justice, did not hesitate even for a moment to render help to the oppressed Christians, even at the risk of provoking the animosity of a stronger people who were stricken with prejudice to an abnormal degree. And it was for this reason that some European writers as well as some commentators of the Holy Bible have been pleased to call the Holy Prophet "Chivalrous" for his unique heroism and courage.

There is yet another fact worth mentioning. The Holy Prophet had left behind him his word of honour that when the Muslims would conquer Egypt, they should abide by the sacred covenant already announced by him, viz. that it should be the responsibility of the Muslim rulers to protect the life, honour, and property of every non-

Muslim subject of the Islamic State, that all the rights of citizenship of such subjects should be properly safeguarded, and that they should enjoy freedom of speech and conscience. All these rights and privileges were conferred on the Christian subjects of Egypt when it was conquered. However it came to pass on one occasion that the son of 'Amr bin al-'As, the conqueror and governor of Egypt, beat up a Christian in public. This incident threw the Muslim rulers to a severe test. When the news reached Medina, the Caliph Hazrat 'Umar Faruq summoned both the governor and the young prince to appear before him at Medina, where the Caliph reprimanded the governor, saying :

"منذ کم تعبدتم الناس الذین ولدتهم امهاتهم احرارا"

[i.e. since how long have you assumed the authority of enslaving people born free by their mothers ?]. This reproof uttered by a just and truth-loving Caliph, as Hazrat 'Umar was, is a historical fact and shall abide and endure for all time to come. Besides this sharp admonition, the young prince was also punished in the presence of his father and the public.

This action of justice created confidence in the minds of the people ; it convinced them that the rights of the non-Muslim subjects were absolutely

safe and secure in the Islamic State. On the Christians of Egypt particularly it produced a very wholesome effect, they would never imagine that the Muslim rulers and their princes could also b held to account for their deeds and punished, an that too for the sake of protection of the non-Muslims. They came to know that the Islamic law recognises no such thing as any person's special privilege or prerogative.

Having recounted these instructive facts of history, we wish the Christians of the world in general, and those of Pakistan in particular, to recall Jesus' (peace be on him) teaching : *Love thine enemy*. Is it, then, right for them to harbour animosity and ill-will in their minds against such a kind and benevolent personality as the Holy Prophet of Islam and pour into the ears of the Muslim youth poisonous and perverted things against him ? The people of Pakistan expected no such treatment at the hands of the Christians, and it is not surprising that this behaviour should shock and rend the hearts of the people of Pakistan.

The Christian subjects of Pakistan are witnesses to the pleasing spectacle of Islamic toleration. They are living a life of honour and peace. They enjoy freedom of every kind, and their way of life, their religious rites and worship are not

interfered with in any way. Their rights are thoroughly safeguarded and many Christians hold high positions in the country's administrative machinery. These are, undoubtedly, the fine fruits of the Holy Prophet's sublime teachings which they are enjoying to their benefit. It is, therefore, not proper for them to use offensive and bitter language in respect of this benign benefactor. We appeal to the Christians of the world in general, and those of Pakistan in particular, that they should revise and reconsider their methods and ways of preaching, and abstain from practices which injure Muslim feelings. The world to-day stands in need of peace and mutual goodwill more than it ever did before. The Holy Prophet's principles which have been stated in the clearest terms point out that just as God is the *Rabb* and Lord of the entire universe, so He is the *Rabb*, i.e. Cherisher, of all the nations of the world, that all the nations of the world are one great family of God, and that those who treat this great Family of the Most Beneficent God with kindness and affection are His loved ones. It has, further, been taught by the Holy Prophet that just as, for the development of our physical faculties, God has bestowed upon all nations of the world, without distinction or discrimination, the blessings of

sun and moon, wind and rain, in like manner, for the development of their spiritual and moral faculties, He has showered His spiritual bounties upon all the nations of the world in the form of Heavenly Books; and for that reason, such noble and righteous men of God have been appearing among the nations as worshipped and adored the Most High God, and rendered selfless service to His creatures. And it was for this reason that the Muslims have been commanded to believe in all the prophets and Sacred Scriptures of all the nations of the world, and to cherish profound respect for them all, and to have sincere faith that God's good and righteous men are found among all the peoples of the world. These articles of faith go a long way to bring about genuine union among the peoples of the world, and to establish real peace.

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Fundamentals of

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

in the Light of the Gospels

MAN studies Sacred Scriptures that he may be able to get a good knowledge of the Most High God, and of the ways and means of His will and pleasure. Both these important objects can be gained through a careful study of the Gospels. First of all, the Gospels should be studied to obtain knowledge of the Most High God; for, without a knowledge of that Supreme Being, neither peace of mind nor purity of action can be achieved.

The Concept of Divine Unity in the Gospels

About the Most High God the Gospels say that He is the One True God, Who alone should be worshipped and adored, served devotedly and obeyed; and that it is senseless and irrational to raise a creature of His, whosoever he may be, to Divine heights. In this context, the following verses may be read with advantage:

Again, the devil taketh him [Jesus] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve (Matt., 4 : 8–10).

This passage inculcates in an unambiguous and plain language that the Most High God is the One True God, Who alone should be worshipped and adored, and no other being excepting Him should be invoked in prayer. Besides Matthew, other Gospels, too, have laid stress upon this rational and useful doctrine:

(1) And one of the scribes asked . . . him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*: Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other than he . . . . And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God . . . . (Mark, 12: 28–34).

(2) And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up,

and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live (Luke, 10: 25-28).

Matthew in his Gospel (*22*: *37*-39) has also recorded this rational teaching *literatim* and then stresses its importance thus (22 : 40): *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*.

(3) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent [as Prophet] (John, 17 : 3).

From these passages, it is clear beyond all doubt that Jesus taught and preached that man should believe in the only true God, and should worship and adore none besides Him.

Divine Commandment and Tradition

As against this Divine teaching, it is highly foolish and improper to take to any other traditional man-made teaching. Jesus, too, had sensed this inclination of the people, namely, that setting aside the Book of God, they begin to show obedience to the personal biddings of their religious preceptors. Jesus said:

> For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . . And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition (Mark, 7: 8–9).

This important caution of Jesus has also been recorded by Matthew in his Gospel (15: 3-6):

> Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? . . . . Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

This word of warning uttered by Jesus himself should be sufficient to awaken the Christians to the Gospel truth, so that they should refuse to accept the dogma of Trinity which stands in defiance of the doctrine of the unity of God.

JESUS DID NOT TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

Sin Washed off by Repentance

The other doctrine whereon Jesus has laid special stress is that man, renouncing all his sinful activities through remorse and repentance, should become as pure and clean as an innocent child whose very nature abhors sin and cherishes love for virtue. Jesus even tries to carry man much higher than this state of innocence, and inculcates that if you wish to be perfect, you must imbue

yourself with Divine attributes. This is indeed an ideal teaching, which stands in bold contrast to the notion of Original Sin and the consequent dogma of Atonement. To quote Jesus' own words:

> Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matt., 19: 13-14).

> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt., 5 : 48).

That man should strive to become innocent and pure like children, and that he should imbue himself with Divine attributes, was the highest aim of Jesus' ministry. It will, therefore, be the grossest injustice to Jesus to assert that he inculcated that man was sinful by nature. On the contrary, Jesus never believed that man had become rotten and impure to such an extent that it was impossible to reclaim and reform him, and that the only way to save and deliver him was that Jesus himself should lay down his life on the cursed Cross, bearing the burden of the sins of humanity. There is nothing in the Gospel to approve and endorse this doctrine. The Gospel, while directing on the one hand that man should

become sinless and pure like innocent children, and should imbue himself with Divine attributes, cannot on the other hand have subscribed to the doctrine of Atonement.

Man's Moral and Spiritual Reform

The recipe which can bring about and restore man's spiritual and moral equilibrium is Repentance. It means the giving up of the wrong way, and returning to the right path. Man quits the wrong path only when he comes to believe that trudging upon it will prove injurious. He, therefore, returns to the right way, remorse-stricken. The fire of regret and repentance burns up and consumes his sins; and his mind consequently regains spiritual harmony. The human body has inherently been made healthful by the Most High God. Of course, man sometimes falls ill, but he regains health after proper treatment. Very much in the same way, God has created man sound and strong spiritually also, but whenever he falls a prey to some immoral tendency, repentance comes to his rescue and he recovers moral health. The same Supreme Being, Who has laid down a law for the physical recovery of the ailing man, has also ordained a law for his spiritual healing. And it was in view of this eternal truth that Jesus

emphasised that one should have recourse to repentance for spiritual reconstruction. See what Jesus observes in this connection :

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt., 4 : 17).

And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke, 5 : 29–32).

God is Pleased with Those who Repent

Jesus (peace be on him) further said: Just as a sheperd, recovering one lost sheep, becomes happy and pleased :

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance (Luke, 15 : 7).

It is obvious from these quotations that Jesus believed in the universal fact that healthy and the "whole" persons exist along with the sick, and the sinners side by side with the righteous,

and that just as the healthy and the "whole" stand in no need of a physician, likewise the righteous need no repentance. Jesus also says that a sinner is healed with repentance and that when a sinner repents, there is joy in heaven over this act of the sinner.

Repentance Procures Paradise

Jesus reposed full belief in the fact, as is borne out by the following verses, that a man could inherit paradise by having recourse to repentance and remorse:

Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him (Matt., 21 : 31-32).

Jesus has stated here in clear words that Repentance is such a sure and sovereign remedy that it would prove efficacious for any and every ailing person in every age. John the Baptist tried this effective cure with the result that the publicans and the harlots entered the kingdom of God.

Universal Belief in the Healing and Uplifting Power of Repentance

The unfailing efficacy of this cure is admitted

by every nation of the world. Through Repentance sinful people are ennobled and purified; even the thieves give up their life-long habit of stealing, and begin to live a new and honest life; and the liars, forsaking their degrading habit, become trustworthy and truthful. Reformatory schools profess that repentance is efficacious, jails make use of this universal cure with manifest advantage, by the grace whereof some of their wretched inmates give up their old habits, and start a better and improved life. If man's reclamation had been an impossibility, no reformatory schools would ever have been established, nor would Jesus or his forerunner, John the Baptist, have emphasised the doctrine of Repentance. We read in Matthew:

> Then went out to him [John the Baptist] Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father . . . therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Matt., 3 : 5–10).

In fine, all the wise men of the world and all

the apostles raised by God have found it very useful for the reclamation of a fallen man that he should repent, i.e. believing that the wrong path pursued by him is deadly and destructive, he should turn back to the right way. It is true that he repairs to this course only when the disadvantages of the wrong path become conspicuous before his eyes and he becomes fully conscious of the shame and disgrace that await him. The fire of self-reproach burns down his sins to ashes, and the tears of his regret and remorse wash off the stains produced by his transgression. Repentance was the chief care of John the Baptist about whom the following description will prove instructive, for it has a special bearing on this subject:

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God [through repentance] . . . and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just [through repentance] (Luke, 1 : 15-17).

The teaching of John the Baptist bore good fruit so that even the harlots entered the kingdom of God (Matt., 21 : 31). To assert in the face of these hard facts that man cannot be delivered of sin is to contradict the Divine truth, and to

give the lie to the teaching of the righteous prophets like Jesus and John the Baptist. Jesus has, like John, laid utmost stress upon the doctrine that man can be cleansed of sin through repentance, and become as pure and clean as an innocent child:

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt., 18 : 2-3).

Jesus has indeed expounded and explained this great principle of Repentance on many occasions. He said, addressing Nicodemus:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (John, 3 : 3-4).

It is obviously clear that Nicodemus could not understand the words spoken by Jesus. Jesus meant to say that man should bring about such a complete change by means of repentance that it may seem as if he was born again. All the prophets, as stated by Jesus himself, have agreed unanimously upon this great principle taught by Jesus and John the Baptist:

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of

the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute . . . . Verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered (Luke, 11: 47-52).

The Law of Reclamation

It can be easily understood from this sacred text that the law which the Most High God gave unto the prophets for the reclamation of a fallen man was the doctrine of Repentance, and he actually succeeded in bringing many a fallen man back to the virtuous path by its means, and sinners became worthy and fit to be admitted into the kingdom of God. This beneficial law which had been inculcated by the prophets is also found embedded in the very nature of man. Parents reform their children by this effective cure, and teachers succeed in reclaiming spoilt children. It is on account of this natural goodness of the human heart that convicts come to adopt a new life and become useful citizens of the State. It is the same natural law by means of which ailments of the

human body are cured, and the body once again becomes healthy and "whole." In the physical as well as in the spiritual world this law of God holds good, and it has proved to be invariably true and effective. The Most High God, being merciful and compassionate, would never wish that a man who has once fallen ill should ever remain so. In the same way, it is not His law that one who has once committed a sin should continue to welter in sin, and should be condemned and thrown out of His kingdom for all time to come.

Jesus and the Doctrine of Atonement

Jesus has taught in the clearest terms that just as it is in the nature of man to forgive and forget, in like manner it is also the glory of the Most High God to forgive sins. And it is for this reason that he has laid utmost emphasis on this teaching that it is proper and meet for a person to forgive him who has offended against him or, in other words, who has committed a sin against him. Jesus has taught us to pray: O God! forgive us our sins, as we forgive them who have sinned against us. He has also warned us, saying, if we forgive not them who have trespassed against us, the Most High God, too, will not forgive us for our trespasses. Let us ponder over the words of his

prayer:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. . . . For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matt., 6: 9-15).

The same teaching has been reiterated in the following verses:

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. . . . Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. . . . And his lord was wroth [with another servant who had not forgiven his brother's debt of an hundred pence], and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses (Matt., 18: 21-35).

Furthermore:

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matt., 7: 9-12).

This teaching which constitutes real good tidings is in perfect unison with human nature and is readily accepted.

The Ways of God's Will and Pleasure

The teaching of the prophets is not limited to repentance alone. This part of their teaching pertains only to those people who are morally sick. As for those who are not so, or have recovered after a spell of moral ailment, the most important part of their teaching is to persuade them to seek and search after the ways of God's will and pleasure. Jesus, who was one of the apostles of God, has also laid great stress upon the achievement of God's will and pleasure, observing that it can be obtained only through complete submission to His commandments. He said that the Divine Word certainly gives life, that is to say, the Word of

God or the Book of God, which enjoined upon men to walk in the way of God's will and pleasure, infuses a new life into them. In Jesus' own words:

(1) Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (John, 4: 34).

In this verse Jesus has stated clearly in respect of himself that he had been sent by the Most High God as an apostle, and that the purpose of his life was to do the will of God, and fulfil the work of preaching truth, entrusted to him. The highest destiny of all the prophets and in fact of all mankind is to carry out the will of God —which results in a happy and peaceful life. This sublime and ennobling doctrine contradicts and falsifies the notions of Original Sin and the consequent Atonement.

Superiority of Spiritual over Blood Relationship

(2) Said Jesus, if his blood-relations believed not in him, they were not his relatives, and that his relatives were those who acted according to the will of the Most High God. It is stated in the Gospel according to Mark (3: 31-35):

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

It appears from this statement of Jesus that his mother, brothers and sisters believed not in his teachings, and it was for this reason that he neither stood up to receive them, nor considered their relationship to be a point of honour and pride for himself. On the other hand, he gave preference over them to those others who accepted and acknowledged his teachings.* Jesus himself obeyed the commandments of the Most High God, and required of his followers also to do the same. According to Jesus, those who do the will of God are his relations and are placed above those who claim blood relationship with him.

*Jesus' indifferent attitude towards his kith and kin was not without reason. They were opposed to his teachings, which they called and condemned as a madman's raving. Mark has this sad story on record in the following words (3 : 20-21) :

And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him : for they said, He is beside himself.

Divine Word Gives Life

(3) Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungerd. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt., 4 : 1-4).

Just as rain generates life in the dead soil, in the same way Divine Word brings to life the dead soil of the human heart. It is a fact of Nature that the human heart is God-conscious, and it is on account of this natural affinity that the Word of God succeeds in fertilising the soil of human heart. And just as the development of body imparts strength to physical organs, likewise the development of mental and spiritual faculties builds up an excellent moral fabric. Teachers entrusted with the education of young children know full well that it is the proper evolution of the faculties planted in the minds of children that makes man a real man, and lifts him up to the highest plane of spirituality. The purpose of human life is achieved by unfolding and evolving these faculties which the Most High God has

created in man, and it was with reference to this great aim that Jesus had said that Divine Word infuses life into the human heart. This teaching of Jesus is, of a truth, sublime and scientific. His great aim was to cultivate human faculties with the water of heavenly word, and this should be the highest goal and objective before mankind. All psychologists and educationists keep this principle in view. No educationist can subscribe to the dogma of Original Sin, which forms the basis of Atonement. This truth was affirmed by Jesus: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God (Matt., 5 : 8). What a fine and elevating teaching is this, compared to which the doctrine of Atonement neither appeals, nor offers any attraction, to the people of knowledge and understanding!

One and the Same Law for the Evolution of Body and Soul

Jesus has said that the same God Who has created body has also created soul, i.e. the creator of both body and soul is one and the same Being. It is, therefore, necessary that there should be one and the same law governing the evolution of both the body and the soul. In this connection, Luke records (11 : 37–41):

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. *Ye* fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as you have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

The texts of the Gospel set forth lucidly that there is, in the laws governing the body and the soul, homogeneity and coherence. If the soul be sick, abomination creeps into human deeds, but if the soul be healthy and pure, goodness and excellence are reflected in man's actions. Divine Word is the light of the soul. When the soul is illuminated with God's Word, goodness and virtue are mirrored in human actions. This teaching of Jesus, there is no gainsaying the fact, is at once rational and useful. It appeals to human nature and penetrates into the human soul. To inculcate and preach the unintelligible doctrine of Atonement, as against this beautiful teaching, is to belie and repudiate the shining truths taught by Jesus.

SALVATION DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE TO DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

Salvation depends upon a true belief in the existence of the Most High God, and complete obedience to His commandments. Jesus said:

(1) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent [as a prophet] (John, 17 : 3).

To repose faith in the One True God and to look upon Jesus as His apostle has been inculcated in this verse. And these two articles of faith, which are of fundamental importance, are the only factors that can create moral rectitude and purity in human actions. Just as it is necessary to believe in the One True God, in the same way it is also necessary to believe in the apostle who points to the ways and means of acquiring Divine pleasure, and who himself leads the life of an exemplar.

(2) Emphasising the importance of doing good deeds, Jesus said:

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood

arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great (Luke, 6: 46-49).

(3) Matthew reads to the same effect:

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments .... The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven (Matt., 19: 16-21).

And again:

(4) There came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God. Thou knowest the commandments.... And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth .... Then Jesus ... said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt

have treasure in heaven (Mark, 10: 17-21).

(5) And they [the angels] shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt., 13: 41-43).

(6) And these [i.e. the evil-doers] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Matt., 25 : 46).

(7) I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt., 5 : 20).

(8) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt., 5 : 16).

From these verses it is clear beyond all doubt that Jesus, besides requiring the people to be chaste and pure, also brought home to them with great force and clarity that, without real and true righteousness, life eternal could never be achieved. Furthermore, it transpires from a study of these verses that the most desirable thing, as believed by Jesus, was that people should turn to and obey the Most High God, and adopt a life of God-fearing and good actions. This and this only is the way that pleases God and God's people. The dogma

of Atonement, therefore, appears to be repugnant to the true teachings of Jesus Christ. This doctrine should therefore be renounced.

Sinful Life Leads into Hell

Just as noble and virtuous living gains life eternal for man, in the same way a sinful and vicious life generates the fire of hell. In this connection Gospel texts read:

(1) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . ye are the children of them which killed the prophets . . . . Ye serpents ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt., 23:29-33).

(2) The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof (Matt., 21-43).

(3) They [the angels] shall gather out of his kingdom . . . them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt., 13:41-43).

(4) So shall it be at the end of the world [just as from among the good fish the bad ones are cast away]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt., 13: 49-50).

(5) O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt., 12: 34-37).

(6) A woman of ill-repute came and poured perfumed ointment on Jesus' head and feet, whereupon Jesus said :

Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her (Matt., 26 : 13; Mark, 14 : 9; Luke, 7 : 37-39).

(7) When a poor widow contributed two mites which made a farthing, to be spent in the way of God, Jesus said unto his disciples :

Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury (Mark, 12 : 43).

These verses throw a flood of light on some very vital questions, affirming that salvation depends on leading a righteous and honest life. Even the smallest good is acceptable to and has its reward

with the Most High God. The doctrine of Atonement, in the face of this great truth, appears opposed to the word of God, and therefore loses ground. The following verses run in the same strain:

(8) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt., 25 : 41).

(9) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven . . . . And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man . . . . And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand (Matt., 7 : 21-26).

(10) Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time (Mark, 10 : 29).

(11) And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Mark, 13 : 13).

(12) A Samaritan took mercy on an afflicted

man. Jesus appreciated and admired him, saying that he acted up to the Divine Commandment which said: Love thy neighbour as thyself (Luke, 10 : 33-37).

It can be easily gathered from these clearly-worded verses of the Gospel that the Most High God thinks well of and requites noble deeds. His Law, in this respect, is one and the same for a Christian, a Samaritan, and any other non-Christian. People who call themselves Christians, but act not in conformity with Jesus' teachings, shall be turned out of the kingdom of God; for lip-profession has no value, no atonement will come to their rescue.

God Forgives Sinners

God hears not the sinners, nor accepts their worship. But if a sinner should repent, and, recoiling from his evil course, reform himself, then the Most High God certainly forgives him. It is recorded in John (9 : 31) that *God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth*. Likewise, it is stated in Luke (15 : 7) that even if one sinner should repent, and, forsaking the wrong way, return to the Right Path, the Most High God becomes happy and pleased.

THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED IN THE WORLD, SAYS THE GOSPEL

Whereas it is explicitly stated in the Gospel that ever since the world came into being, the righteous people have ever been present in it, the Gospel nowhere says that the whole of the human race is sinful by nature. From a study of the verses quoted below, it becomes abundantly clear that Adam himself was good and righteous; and from him good and righteous people have been born in every age.

(1) God created man [Adam] in his *own* image (Gen., 1:27).

(2) Adam . . . was the *son* of God (Luke, 3:38).

To be called and denominated as the son of God, is, as a matter of fact, the highest honour which can be attained only by doing good and righteous works with a devoted and sincere heart. It would be highly unbecoming for the Gospel to say that Adam was the son of God and then to say, in the same breath, that he was born in sin, and so also his progeny.

(3) Adam had two sons, Abel and Cain. The Gospel says about them: *The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering* (Gen., 4:4). Abel was, in the sight of God, good and righteous, and was

designated as the first martyr (refer Gen., 4:3-5; Matt., 23:35; Luke, 11:51).

It is thus evident that there were born, among the children of Adam, good as well as guilty persons, and that neither Adam nor the whole of his progeny were sinful and iniquitous. The historical truths recorded in the Bible prove conclusively that the doctrine of calling and condemning Adam and his offspring as sinful by nature is a doctrine repugnant to the Divine teaching revealed by the Most High God. For instance:

Zacharias and His Wife were Righteous

(4) Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke, 1:5-6).

(5) John the Baptist was righteous and great. It was said of him through a prophecy that *he shall be great in the sight of the Lord . . . and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb* (Luke, 1:13-15).

These verses prove beyond question that Zacharias and his wife were both sinless and righteous, and that it is within the power of man to abide by and obey Divine Commandments, and that all blessedness and bliss lies in the observance

of Divine Laws. It is, therefore, absolutely wrong to assert that the children of Adam are sinful by nature and that salvation is obtainable by atonement and not by means of righteous living. The Church Christianity, as we have it to-day, condemns the best of creation by calling all the human race as inherently sinful. Such a teaching, it needs no saying, which casts disgrace on the entire humanity, certainly cannot be from the Heavenly Father.

Doctrine of Atonement contrary to Biblical Teaching

Both Zacharias and his wife were righteous and blameless, and their son, John, too, who had been raised as a prophet by the Most High God, was righteous and great and, through his sublime teaching, people also became noble and righteous. In view of these truths stated by the Gospel, the doctrine of Atonement is evidently baseless and irrational; rather it is dead against the true and sensible teaching of the Bible. To regard such a dogma as a cardinal principle of religion and to ascribe it to Jesus Christ is highly objectionable.

Mention of Prophetesses and Righteous Women

(6) Even Joseph, the husband of Mary, has

been spoken of in the Gospel as *a just man* (Matt., 1 : 19), and in the same way, another man, Joseph of Arimathaea, has been called *a good and just man* (Luke, 23:50).

(7) A woman, Anna, was a prophetess (Luke, 2 : 36). Besides her, the Torah and the Gospel make mention of other women who were Divine Messengers and, pointing out the ways of God's will and pleasure, called upon the people to walk in the way of God. It is not, therefore, proper and meet for the Christians to call and condemn woman as the source of sin, neither is it right to believe that man has ever been such a devil.

(8) And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon ; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him (Luke, 2 : 25).

Enoch, too, is Alive in Heaven

(9) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* (Hebrews, 11 : 5-6).

The Gospel calls Enoch as the near and dear one of God. And it is, therefore, unjustifiable and

incorrect to profess and preach as a fundamental principle of faith that all the children of Adam are sinful, and that the only way to save and deliver them is to repose belief in the dogma of Atonement.

This sacred verse tells us that Enoch is alive in heaven, and the commandment of the Most High God in respect of him is that he shall not see death. If we should accept, for the sake of argument, the Christian claim that Jesus is alive in heaven wherefrom he will descend again on this earth, and then he will close his eyes in a sleep that knows no waking, it shall have to be admitted in all fairness that Enoch has been given a higher status than Jesus.

(10) Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God . . . ; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God (Hebrews, 7 : 1-3).

Whereas, on the one hand, the position of Melchisedec appears to be much superior in every respect to that of Jesus, on the other hand, it also becomes decisively clear that human race is not corrupted with innate sin, that there have always been good and great men, and that some of them

were even higher in status than Jesus Christ. The people of the Gospel should ponder over this very important question and see for themselves whether or not they have been setting at naught and repudiating the clear teaching of the Gospel.

(11) Jesus is called son of Joseph, son of David and son of Abraham. It proves conclusively that Joseph was a good and righteous man, as was also Prophet David of whose throne Jesus was the rightful inheritor. Abraham is looked upon and regarded as their great progenitor by both the Jews and the Christians, and both take pride in calling themselves his progeny. Having accepted these great men as good and righteous and the near and dear ones of God, how can a sane and sensible man reconcile his conscience to the Christian notion that the whole of the human race is sinful by nature, and cannot be saved but by believing in Vicarious Atonement.

(12) It was a matter of belief with Jesus that the whole of the human race is not sinful, since both good and bad people are always found among all the nations of the world, and the sinners can return to the Right Path through repentance and become the dear ones of God. Jesus says that those who are healthy and "whole" need no physician, that is to say, those physically or spiritually sick

can be cured by treatment, but there are, besides them, those who are sound in body and mind. Again, Jesus says that God's sun shines upon the good and the bad, and His rain falls on both the righteous and the sinners. Turn to Matthew (5 : 44-45) and read :

> Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

To fly in the face of this clear and categorical teaching of Jesus, and believe in the dogma of Atonement, is but a great wrong.

Belief in God requires Obedience to His Apostle

Jesus said that for the achievement of eternal and everlasting life, it is essentially necessary that man should believe in the One True God, and it is equally necessary that one should believe in the apostleship of the prophet Jesus. In order to acquaint His servants with the ways that lead into His presence, God picks up a righteous man to be His apostle, and he, with the blessing and grace of Divine guidance and his own excellent example,

sets people on the Right Path. With reference to these two very important articles of faith, the Gospel has inculcated :

(1) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent [as thy apostle] (John, 17 : 3).

(2) Addressing his disciples, Jesus said :

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me (Matt., 10 : 40).

(3) Again :

Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me (Mark, 9 : 37).

In these verses Jesus has expounded very explicitly the real purpose for which an apostle is sent, namely, to impart unto the people a knowledge of the Divine Being, and to call upon them to obey the Commandments of God, and to follow in the footsteps of this apostle. But the followers of the apostle, there is no gainsaying this fearful fact, either through mistake or having been overwhelmed with excessive love for him, invest him with Divinity instead of looking upon him as an apostle of God.

(4) He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God (John, 3 : 33-34).

Here Jesus professes that he was God's apostle who appeared among his people to teach them the most important principle of the unity of God.

JESUS, A HUMAN BEING AND AN APOSTLE OF GOD

In the verse quoted above, some very valuable truths have been stated: *first*, that Jesus was an apostle of God; *second*, that the teaching which he imparted unto the people was not his own, but it had been revealed unto him by the Most High God, and those who accepted that teaching set a seal on the fact of God's existence. And this is, of a truth, the intended purpose of religion.

(5) God's word came upon Jesus:

If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God (John, 8 : 39-40).

Jesus was an Apostle of God

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me (John, 7 : 16).

If I honour myself, my honour in nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God (John, 8 : 54).

For I have not spoken of myself; but the

Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak (John, 12 : 49).

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (John, 9 : 31).

These are precious truths which have been set forth with clarity to convince us that Jesus was not God, but was God's apostle, who preached that the pleasure of God can be obtained by worshipping Him and doing His will. Jesus has also stated that mankind consists of those who sin against God, and those who do His will ; all mankind is not sinful. Jesus has again described himself as an apostle, and stated in categorical terms that the teaching preached by him was not his own personal word, but the Word of the Most High God, which he received and communicated to the people. The inevitable logical conclusion, therefore, is that if Jesus had called himself an apostle, he was, most surely, a human being, and the term "man" used in respect of him in John 8 : 40 supports the view that he was but a mortal.

(6) The Gospel has the following fact on its record :

And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said,

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me (John, 11 : 41-42).

Jesus, a Near One of God

The above verse is quite enlightening. Here Jesus describes himself as the *near one* of God whose prayer is answered by Him invariably, and Jesus offers his thanks to the Most High God, that his prayer and supplication may create an effect on the minds of those around him, and they may be persuaded to believe that he is a Divine messenger.

(7) Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me (John, 12 : 44).

The sole fact of his being sent by God as an apostle, as expounded in this verse, was that people might repose their faith in the Most High God.

(8) Said Jesus :

I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting (John, 12 : 49-50).

Jesus has lucidly proclaimed, in this verse, that he had been sent by the Most High God or,

in other words, he was an apostle of God, and that whatever he spoke, he spoke under Divine Commandment, and that it was not his own word which he spoke, but the Word of God which infuses life eternal ; just as he had said according to Matthew (4 : 4) that :

> Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

God's Word is that beneficial heavenly water which enlivens the soil of human heart. Jesus also said :

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me (John, 13 : 20).

This text draws, as it were, a boundary line between the assignment of a prophet and the domain of God Almighty.

Sign of the Near Ones of God

Jesus has pointed out that the near and dear ones of God are those who obey and carry out, to their best, the commandments of the Most High God. In the verses quoted above Jesus has included himself in the list of God's chosen men and His apostles.

Jesus, not God, but God's Apostle

The following sacred texts, in which the term

prophet has been used in respect of Jesus, may now be read with advantage. When the opponents of Jesus raised objections against him, and refused to accept him as an apostle of God, Jesus said in reply that every nation had been indulging in such cruel treatment of the prophet of their age. It would be useful to reproduce below the text in which a mention has been made of the raillery and ridicule poured on him, and how Jesus calmed his conscience, saying that such an ill-treatment had invariably been meted out to the prophets.

Jesus was not God, but Man

(1) And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house (Matt., 13 : 54-57).

A study of this sacred text discloses the hard fact that people looked upon and believed Jesus to be a man and the son of a man, saying that Jesus

was born of his mother, Mary, in the house of a carpenter, and that his parents had children, both boys and girls other than Jesus, and that it was odd that, being a man, a human being like themselves, he should put forth such big claims. Jesus said in reply : It is true that I am a human being. But it is also true that the Most High God picks up, from among the human beings, a man to be His prophet I am also a prophet. Prophets, in the past, had likewise been cruelly treated by their respective peoples. Instead of believing in them, the people deprecated and denounced them.

(2) And when he was come into Jerusalem [riding an ass], all the city was moved, saying, Who is this ? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee (Matt., 21 : 10-11).

(3) The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet (John, 4 : 19).

(4) For the Holy Ghost was not yet *given* ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Many of the people therefore when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet (John, 7 : 39 40).

These texts point out very clearly that Jesus was not God, but he was sent by God.

(5) Jesus remained on the Cross for a short period of three hours. He had fallen into a state of complete unconsciousness, and was not dead, so that when his side was speared (John, 19 : 34),

blood rushed out of his body. One Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor of the State, who was also a disciple of Jesus (John, 19 : 38), took and carried him in that condition to his garden, and placed him in a room (John, 19 : 41) hewn for him in a rock, above the surface of the ground, and a huge stone was rolled to the entrance of the room. Blood had already started circulating in his body ; the fresh air of the garden further helped him regain consciousness. Jesus got up and went into the garden, but for fear of being apprehended again, he dressed himself as a gardener (John 20 : 15). And it so happened that two men went that same day to a village, and they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that Jesus himself drew near, and walked along with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him (Luke, 24 : 13-16). Jesus asked them what things they had been talking of, one to another, as they walked. One of them said to him in reply that he was the only stranger in Jerusalem who knew not the things that had come to pass there in those days :

And he [Jesus] said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, *which was a prophet*, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people (Luke, 24 : 19).

Jesus heard this talk, and, finding it correct and true, contradicted it not; for, a prophet he was, of a truth, and prophets, not gods, are crucified and slain.

(6) Then he [Jesus] said unto them [his disciples], O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken (Luke, 24 : 25).

Admonishing his disciples in this way, Jesus called himself a prophet, in whom prophecies were fulfilled.

(7) Jesus said :

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt., 12 : 39-40).

Describing his resemblance with Prophet Jonah, Jesus made it clear that he was also a prophet, and that he would face the same situation as fell to the lot of Jonah. Jonah was swallowed *alive* by the whale, and *alive* was he vomited out. Jesus, thus outlining his resemblance with Prophet Jonah, proclaimed that he was also a prophet and, like Jonah, he would be put into the grave *alive* and *alive* he would come out from there. Accordingly, the angels had informed the women in a

vision that he was alive. Jesus did not confine his comparison to one prophet alone; he repeated his comparison with Solomon as well (Luke, 11 : 31). Jesus claimed that he was one of the prophets.

Jesus, the Son of a Prophet

(8) While the Pharisees were gathered together Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of David (Matt., *22* : 41-42).

Jesus it is clear, was the son of Joseph, son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam. Jesus took this reply of the people to be correct and true, that he was the son of David, i.e. the son of a prophet. Jesus was indeed a mortal born of mortal parents.

Jesus included himself among Prophets

(9) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets .... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore [God had said], behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify .... Verily I say unto you, [that the

chastisement of] All these things shall come upon this generation O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee . . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate (Matt., 23 : 29-38).

These verses make it abundantly clear that Jesus included himself among the Prophets, and also expressed his apprehension of meeting with the same treatment as was meted out to other prophets ; that his opponents intended to kill him, but the end of such wicked people would indeed be disastrous and grievous. Jesus also made it clear that the Most High God expressed His sorrowfulness and grief on such people, saying, "You build the tomb of the prophets, but your fathers persecuted and killed them."

Jesus consoles himself with the following realisation :

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute (Luke, 11 : 49).

This realisation shows that Jesus classed himself with the Prophets.

Jesus was like other Prophets

(10) [Like other prophets, Jesus, the son of man] must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the day of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man

. . . the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all . . . . But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke, 17 : 25-30).

These verses speak of Jesus' resemblance with the Prophets Noah [Noe] and Abraham, which means that he was a prophet like other prophets, and that just as those people who received not and rejected the Prophets were punished by God, in the same way, the denial of Jesus would draw upon his opponents the wrath and resentment of heaven.

False Prophets

Jesus had warned his people that there would appear false prophets and false Christs and that they should not be deceived by them. His own words read :

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and shall deceive many (Matt., 24 : 5).

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Matt., 24 : 24).

The Gospel of Mark, too, has the same prediction on record (13 : 22) :

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

One gathers from these verses that the words "Prophet" and "Christ" (Messiah) are but the titles of God's Messengers and the very same titles were shared by Christ himself because he was also one of God's Messengers, and as such he was a human being. Jesus accordingly has called himself *Prophet* and Christ. Moreover, in the verses quoted above, mention has been made of the fact that at the time of the appearance of false prophets and false Christs, good and righteous people will also be present. It is, therefore, proved (1) that Jesus was but a prophet and (2) that the entire world is not full of sinners only, but there have been righteous persons in every nation, chosen by the Most High God. The words of Jesus that every age witnessed the presence of righteous people exonerate mankind from the charge of being sinful by nature. This strikes also at the very root of the dogma of Atonement.

Jesus, a Human Being

(1) The Gospels present Jesus as a human being, calling him son of Joseph, son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam. In his genealogy

there are women as well as men, proving thereby that Jesus was but a human being, belonging to the human race. He said that he was the son of David, and had come to inherit David's throne. Once, his mother reprimanded him, saying, "Son, your father and I have been searching after you sorrowfully. Why did you treat us like that, and, without informing us, got separated from us?" The Gospel of Luke has on record the words spoken by Jesus' mother and the answer given by Jesus:

. . . and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he [Jesus] said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them (Luke, 2 : 48-50).

Jesus had a Human Father

(2) This statement of the Gospel, *behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*, proves conclusively that Jesus had both the parents, father and mother. And it was his mother's testimony that Joseph was his father. When the mother reprimanded Jesus, he, instead of showing regret and remorse, took them to task in return, but they could not understand his words.

Jesus meant to say that they were his physical parents, and that he had a Spiritual Father also, the preaching and propagation of Whose commandments was his sacred duty to perform.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover . . . as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem ; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it* (Luke, 2 : 41-43).

It has been repeated twice in these verses that Jesus had both father and mother, i.e. he was the son of Joseph and Mary.

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph (Luke, 3 : 23).

The words enclosed within brackets had been inserted by some copyist of the Gospel in order to preach and propagate a wrong belief. But the purpose of the interpolator could not even then be achieved, for it is clear from the original text that Jesus was the son of Joseph. Mary herself testified to it, saying, *Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*. The record of Matthew (1 : 16) also shows that the copyist is wrong in inserting words of his own into the Gospel :

(3) Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

It is regrettable to note that interpolations have found their way into the texts of the Gospels.

Jesus Worked as a Carpenter for thirty years

(4) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary . . . ? (Mark, 6 : 3).

It appears from this verse, read with Luke 3 : 23, that it was at the age of thirty that Jesus started his work of teaching and preaching. One is, therefore, naturally tempted to ask what he had been doing during the thirty years of his life. The answer to this question is furnished in Mark, 6 : 2–4, that he had been pursuing the profession of a carpenter, and, for that reason, people called him a carpenter :

> And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue : and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things ? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands ? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon ? and are not his sisters here with us ? And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house (Mark 6 : 4).

This sacred text of the Gospel tells us that before embarking upon his mission, Jesus worked as a carpenter. We are further told that, besides Jesus, four more brothers and some sisters were also given birth to by Mary, and Joseph was the father of them all.

Jesus was the Son of a Carpenter

(5) *Is not this the carpenter's son?*

[People said:] Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house (Matt., 13 : 55-57).

Both Matthew and Mark state in unison that Jesus was by profession a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter. Both the Evangelists further state that children (boys and girls) other than Jesus were also born to Joseph and Mary. They also declare that Jesus claimed to be a prophet, and not the Divine Being, and that he was not the son of God, but the son of Joseph and Mary; it was, however, on account of his righteousness and rectitude that he was metaphorically called the Son of God.

(6) **Jesus' childhood :**

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ (Matt., 1 : 16).

(7) After the birth of Jesus, his parents apprehended danger to his life as stated in Matthew (2 13-15) :

. . . behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt : and was there until the death of Herod.

(8) It is evident from this passage that Jesus' life was in danger, and it was for this reason that his parents, Joseph and Mary, fled from their country, and took refuge in Egypt. Such flight from danger is human, not Divine.

(9) The logical conclusion, therefore, emerges that Jesus' parents knew full well that there was no Divinity in Jesus, otherwise not even a shadow of fear could ever have crossed their minds, nor would they have felt the necessity of fleeing from the enemy's country.

JESUS LIVED IN CONSTANT FEAR WHICH IS NOT AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

There is yet another point which deserves to be carefully considered. According to psychologists, fear of danger generated during childhood leaves a lasting impress on the mind of a man and that is possibly the reason why Jesus remained a victim of fear and apprehension throughout his life and did not preach before the people openly, but always slipped away from the scene of danger to the place of secrecy and solitude. Jesus believed that his opponents were after taking his life, and he was, therefore, always fear-stricken, and prayed to be saved from the death of dishonour and disgrace.

When he was produced in the court of Pilate, out of fear, he was mute as if he had lost his power of speech, and could utter not a single word in self-defence. Pilate, of course, was highly astonished at the plight of Jesus. Similarly, when he regained consciousness after crucifixion, fearing his recapture he disguised himself as a gardener and kept hiding here and there for forty days, finally fleeing from his country to a place of safety. Had there been any Divinity in him, he would have availed himself of this golden opportunity to challenge his opponents and make them accept

and acknowledge his claim. But, having been stricken with fear, he had become miserably nervous and spiritless. This hard fact goes to prove conclusively not only that there was not a whit of Divinity in him, but that he was not even a brave and courageous man.

Jesus was from the Seed of David and was not God

(10) About the birth of Jesus, the angel gave the glad tidings to Mary in the following words:

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke, 1: 31–32).

In this prophecy, the words, *the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David*, need careful thought. There is mention of both God and Jesus' father David and of David's throne being given unto Jesus. This verse alone is sufficient to prove conclusively that Jesus was from the seed of David, was destined to inherit David's throne, and that he was a mortal and not at all God Almighty Whose grace was being besought by Jesus in getting back the throne of his father David.

JESUS HAD BEEN RAISED ONLY FOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Besides, the sole purpose for which Jesus had been sent was to collect the "lost sheep" of the house of Israel. He set before him no other purpose. Accordingly he declared that he had come to seek the "lost sheep" of Israel and that his mission was confined to the guidance of the children of Israel. Addressing a non-Israelite woman, Jesus announced in plain language :

> . . . it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast *it* unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes Lord : yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs (Mark, 7 : 27–28).

Jesus called the other nations *dogs* and *swine*, for he considered the Jews to be the only chosen people of God. St. Matthew supports the fact that Jesus was averse to non-Jews :

> Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine (Matt., 7 : 6).

And it was with this purpose in view that Jesus gave the following direction to his disciples :

> . . . Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt., 10 : 5–6).

In short, these passages make it clear that Jesus had come only for the guidance of the children of Israel, and to recapture and restore unto them their lost kingdom. Jesus never claimed that he had been raised for the guidance of all the nations of the world; he never professed that the entire human race was sinful by nature, and that he had come to bear the burden of their sins by laying down his life on the Cross His mission was indeed definite.

(11) Jesus was circumcised, and his mother remained for forty days in a state of impurity. These are far from being the perfections of the Divine Being.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS . . . . And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present *him* to the Lord; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord) (Luke, 2 : 21–23).

Jesus was circumcised in accordance with the law of Moses, just as his forerunner, John the Baptist, was circumcised. His mother took her bath of purification after forty days, according to the Mosaic law, and then, to offer a sacrifice, they went to the synagogue with a pair of young pigeons.

Jesus was born exactly in the human way and his mother remained in a state of impurity for forty days in common with other women of the world, the Jewish rites and rituals on such occasions having been carefully observed. At the time of Jesus' birth, nothing peculiar took place to suggest that he was an extraordinary child, to say the least of his possessing Divinity. It was later that the people deified him and his mother, notwithstanding the humanly circumstances that attended the act of delivery.

Jesus, a Follower of Jewish Law

(12) Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem (Luke, 2 : 41-43).

This passage and those preceding it point to the fact that Jesus, his mother Mary and his father Joseph were Jews and followed the Jewish law. How, then, can Jesus be considered God?

Jesus' Mental and Physical Development like other Human Children

(13) And the child [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon him (Luke, 2 : 40).

That is to say, as Jesus grew up in age, his mental and physical capacities developed gradually, very much like other children.

The Gospels regard Jesus as a Human Being

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke, 2 : 52).

It has again been repeated in this verse that the mental and physical faculties of Jesus developed gradually, and that on account of his righteousness and moral rectitude he gained favour with God and man. These qualities also show that Jesus was nothing more than a human being, and to raise him, therefore, from the plane of humanity to that of Divinity is an unjustifiable contradiction of the clear teaching of the Gospel.

No Historical Evidence of Jesus

Of the life-story of Jesus, only this much is known, as has been stated in the foregoing pages; there is also a mention of his missionary activities, limited only to a short period of three years. No account of his life prior to this period of three years, nor that of the period following crucifixion, when he regained consciousness and escaped to the Eastern countries has ever been committed to writing by any chronicler. It is for this reason that some European writers have stated that Jesus

is not an historical personage, meaning thereby that the details of the life-story of the man who has been installed on the pedestal of Divinity are not known. The fate of his disciples, too, in this respect seems to be no better than that of their Master; except for the fact that their names happen to be recorded in the pages of the Gospels, nothing more is known about them. But not to speak of these insignificant fellows, no one is acquainted even with the life-story of Joseph and Mary, nor of Jesus' brothers and sisters. It seems, as if, to have been ordained by God Almighty that there should remain no historical trace of the man who was to be deified by the people, nor any trace of his parents, or of his brothers and sisters, or even of his disciples.

Humility and Humanity of Jesus

And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God (Matt., 19 : 17).

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that He is your God (John, 8 : 54).

While confessing his humility and humanity, Jesus proclaimed that God was as much the Father of the Jews as He was his.

NO MENTION OF CHURCH DOGMA IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The teaching of Jesus, called the *Sermon on the Mount*, reads as follows:

(1) Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

(2) Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

(3) Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

(4) Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

(5) Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

(6) Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

(7) Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

(8) Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

(9) Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

(10) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matt., 5 : 3-12).

The Sermon on the Mount, is very well known and renowned, on account of these notable

teachings for it contains the essence of the teachings of Jesus. It is also renowned for the fact that it comprises the most ennobling doctrines.

In this important Sermon, Jesus has made no mention whatsoever of his Divinity, nor that of the doctrine of Trinity. Similarly, he has not taught that humanity is sinful by nature, and that therefore he will lay down his life on the Cross for the salvation of mankind. In fine, the principles preached by the modern Christianity are nowhere to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. On the other hand, what the Sermon on the Mount teaches goes against the modern Christian beliefs. Jesus could not have omitted to mention the prevalent Christian dogmas, if they were the fundamentals of the religion that he taught. On the contrary, the Sermon enunciates some of the noblest qualities that are part and parcel of human nature. Mankind loves virtue and hates vice. In the light of these facts Jesus cannot be held responsible for the offensive notion of the inherent sinfulness of mankind and the untenable dogma of Atonement.

Sermon on the Mount opposed to Teaching of Church Christianity

(1) For example, the teaching, *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*, is quite sufficient to give the lie direct to the doctrines of the

Church Christianity. This text does not proclaim the dogma of Trinity, neither does it condemn mankind as sinful by nature. On the contrary, it teaches that man is capable of attaining purity of heart, and is, therefore, capable of having the reflection of God in the mirror of his heart. The teaching that God is pure, and with the pure only He can have His relationship, has nothing in common with the prevalent dogmas of Christianity. As against this teaching of Jesus, it amounts to discrediting and disgracing him to say that he approved of Original Sin and Atonement.

(2) In the same way, another principle enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount, *Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God*, deserves to be carefully considered. It shows very clearly that man, by being noble and righteous, and by inspiring peace and harmony among people, can be called the Son of God; also that every man, by achieving these sublime qualities, can attain this position of honour of being called the Son of God. It was only on account of having achieved these excellent qualities that Jesus, too, became worthy of being called the Son of God, and it was for this reason that the words: *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest* (Luke, 1:32), had been added to the message giving

the good news of the birth of Jesus. Jesus had been generous in calling upon every man to become the son of God by acting upon his valuable advice.

(3) Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matt., 5 : 11-12).

In this verse, Jesus has given the glad news to those who suffer persecution in the way of God, that their's will be a great reward in heaven. This heartening news for the faithful who suffer persecution in the way of God does not harmonise with what the modern Christianity preaches. At the same time, this fine teaching shows that Jesus classed himself with the prophets and said unto his disciples: "If people should persecute you and me, it will be just in accordance with the law of God—suffering in the way of God brings a unique reward."

(4) Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled* (Matt., 5 : 6). This observation has drawn a true picture of human nature. Man does hunger and thirst after righteousness and does hate evil, because God

created man in His own image and conferred on him a nature that loves good and hates evil. This remarkable doctrine proves like others that Jesus never believed in Original Sin and the consequent Atonement.

JESUS OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

(5) Unjust and unreasonable attitude has been condemned by him :

Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? . . . Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition (Matt., 15 : 3-6).

St. Mark has also recorded in his Gospel this reprimand uttered by Jesus in the following words :

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . . And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition (Mark, 7 : 8-9).

The followers of Jesus Christ, keeping in view this grim warning uttered by him, should reconsider and revise their articles of faith. It is certainly not meet for them to give preference to the traditions of men over the clear and rational commandments of Jesus.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM "SON OF GOD"

Only a Metaphor

It is a common way of speech that a good and righteous man is called the *Son of God* and a vile and wicked man, the *Son of the Devil*. It is the actions of a man that earn him either of these appellations. These terms have been used by way of a metaphor, a figure of speech, and it is a great error on the part of those who hold these metaphorical terms to be of literal significance; they build up the edifice of their belief on a sandy foundation, which is bound to crumble down and fall.

Judas Iscariot, Called Son of Devil

Both these terms, the *Son of God* and the *Son of Devil*, have been used in the Gospel. In Luke (8 : 12) a man has been called *the devil* but, even after having been called *the devil*, he remains a human being all the same, and no transformation whatsoever is wrought in him. The speaker means only to say that he is, like the Devil, wickedness personified. In John (6 : 70) Jesus is reported to have said in respect of a disciple of his, Judas Iscariot : *And one of you* [i.e. the twelve disciples] *is a devil*. Jesus had used these stinging words for

the reason that there was devilry in the mind of that disciple, and he was to betray his holy Master for a mean sum of thirty lucre. Judas Iscariot did not, of course, change his species, but remained a human being, unaltered in the least. It was on account of his unfaithfulness and betrayal that he was called a devil.

Called the Children of the Devil

In the same metaphorical way, the Jews have been called the children of the devil for the reason that they had fallen away from righteousness and rectitude :

> They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God ; this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me ; for I proceeded forth and came from God . . . . Why do ye not understand my speech ? . . . Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do (John, 8 : 39–44).

This text makes it clear that metaphor or figure of speech is quite different from actuality.

The Jews were justified in believing themselves to be the children of Abraham, but as their actions were not like those of Abraham, Jesus did not consider them children of Abraham. This was a metaphorical use of the term. The Jews say : "We be not born of fornication, we have one Father, *even* God." Jesus retorted in reply : "You believe not that the Most High God is your Father ; for, your actions show that your father is the devil, and his lusts you do and fulfil, and listen not to my words, for you are not of God." In short, the terms *son of the devil* and *son of God* should not be taken literally, much less to be made a basis for a religious belief.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BECOMING THE SON OF GOD, AND BECOMING THE SON OF THE DEVIL.

It is recorded in John (13 : 2) that the devil put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray his Master, which shows that Judas Iscariot was, in fact, a human being, and the devil had filled his heart with wickedness, so that he was, as it were, the devil incarnate. This statement has also been repeated in Luke (22 : 3) as : *Then entered Satan into Judas.* Now, turn to Matthew :

> Blessed *are* the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God (5 : 9).

Love your enemies . . . and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven (5 : 44–45).

These verses make it clear that by adopting the life of righteousness and noble deeds, a man can become the Son of God. These verses indicate also that Jesus Christ counted himself among the prophets, and held that people had ever been persecuting and killing the prophets, and that similar plans were being made against him. Most significant facts indeed!

Jesus, to quote another example, rebuked Peter, and called him Satan. When Peter took Jesus away, and began to rebuke him:

. . . [Jesus] turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men (Mark, 8 : 32–33).

It was on account of Peter's unfaithfulness and disloyalty that Jesus called him Satan; otherwise he was every whit a human being and no physical change took place in his body. His faith, however, was weak, in consequence whereof devilry had crept into his heart. It was for this reason that he cursed and swore against Jesus, *saying, I know*

not this man of whom ye speak (Mark, 14 : 71). These lucid texts reveal that it is erroneous to found one's faith on metaphorical expressions.

The Righteous Called Angels and Children of God

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are *equal unto angels*; and are *the children of God*, being the children of the resurrection (Luke, 20 : 34-36).

Jesus has taught in these verses that on the Judgement Day the righteous will be like unto angels, and will be regarded as the children of God. Just as a man, in consequence of his evil actions, becomes the devil, very much in the same way, by adopting a life of righteousness and good deeds he becomes equal to angels, and gains the lofty position of becoming the son of God. This is how Jesus achieved that position and deserved to be called the Son of God.

And [thou] shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David (Luke, 1 : 31-32).

Jesus, in this verse, has been called the son of David; and the happy news has also been given that he would inherit the throne of David, proving thereby that he was a human being, and the son of a human being, but would on account of his righteous life and goodness, be called the Son of God. This sacred verse has established beyond the least shadow of doubt that Jesus belonged to the human species. The Gospels teach that every man, by adopting a life of righteousness and fear of God, can become worthy of being called the Son of God. At another place in the Gospel, it is recorded that when Jesus was baptised of John in the river Jordan, a voice came from heaven announcing for that righteous deed the good gift: "*Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt., 3:14).

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heaven opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mark, 1 : 9-11).

It was on account of Jesus' having performed this good act that this glad tidings came from on High, but prior to the performance of this deed, he

was not considered worthy of this title. Jesus, of a truth, was a human being, as his ancestors, too, were human beings. In other words, he was, physically speaking, a mortal man, and remained even so all through his life, but it was on account of his excellent and pure life that the happy title, *Thou art my beloved son*, was conferred upon him. Just as we call the *Aulia Allah* (i.e. the saintly people) the children of God, in the same way, the Most High God calls His righteous servants generally and His apostles particularly as His children. It is recorded in Exodus, 4 : 22, *Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn* ; and in Genesis, 1 : 27, about Adam, *God created man in his own image* ; Adam has therefore, been called, in the Gospel according to Luke (3 : 38), *Adam which was the son of God.*

Enoch's Ascension and Faithfulness

And with regard to Enoch it has been stated that :

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, that he had pleased God. But *without faith it is impossible to please him* (Hebrews, 11 : 5-6).

Melchisedec Like unto the Son of God

An in respect of Melchisedec, king of Salem, it is written :

. . . first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace ; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God (Hebrews, 7 : 2-3).

No Exclusive Distinction for Jesus

In brief, the term *Son of God* has ever been used not only in respect of the prophets and apostles of God, but also in respect of every righteous man. Jesus, therefore, enjoys no exclusive distinction in this respect. Turn to the Gospel according to Matthew once again :

Blessed *are* the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God (5 : 9).

Pray for them which despitefully used you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven (5 : 44-45).

Jesus, according to the Gospel, was a mortal and his genealogy has been given as : Jesus son of Joseph, son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam ; and it was for this reason that he repeatedly called himself *Son of Man*. His disciples, too, looked upon and regarded him as a human

being, and addressed him as *Master*. His mother said : *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing*. Peter, his most trusted disciple said of Jesus : *I know not the man*. Likewise, Justice Pilate asked *whether the man were a Galilean* (Luke, 23 : 6). And when Jesus was hanged upon the cross, the centurion said, *Certainly this was a righteous man* (Luke, 23 : 47) ; but Mark records (15 : 39) that the centurion said, *Truely this man* was *the son of God*. This proves conclusively that a righteous man and son of God are identical terms in their significance.

Furthermore, Jesus was circumcised. He was also baptised, and for thirty years he carried on the profession of a carpenter, and people called him *carpenter* and *the son of a carpenter*. In fact all activities of Jesus were that of a human being.

Human to the Bone of his Back

Jesus, like all other men, ate bread and drank water and wine. It is stated repeatedly in the Gospel : He sat down at meat ; he ate a piece of broiled fish ; he prayed for bread ; he hungered, and came to a fig tree, but found no fruit thereon, for it was not the fig season ; when he regained consciousness after having been taken down from the Cross, he disguised himself for fear of recap-

ture; he felt hungry, and asked for food, saying: *Have ye here any meat?* When his disciples were affrighted and thought that they had seen a spirit, Jesus said unto them: *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have* (Luke, 24 : 39). At the time of his arrest, as well as at the time of his crucifixion, Jesus was in a state of great agony and distress. It is exactly the picture of an afflicted human being. When produced before Justice Pilate, he could not utter a single word, being overwhelmed with fear. Such shortcomings are only human, and it was on account of these short comings on the part of Jesus that the faith of his disciples faded and failed; some betrayed him into the hands of the enemy, some denied and denounced him, and all of them, in the hour of trial, forsook him and fled (Matthew, 26 : 56; Mark, 14 : 50). Even after crucifixion, the disciples entertained doubts about him, and Jesus reprimanded them as people of little faith. His own mother believed not in him (Luke, 8 : 21); and his kith and kin, too, called him mad, and refused to accept his claim (Mark, 3 : 21). In a word, the Gospels present Jesus as a mortal, Who was raised as a prophet for the good of the children of Israel.

JESUS ON THE JUDGEMENT DAY

In his teachings, Jesus has laid great stress on the point that resurrection shall surely take place when the good and righteous shall be separated from the evil ones, *which do iniquity*, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and enter the Garden of Paradise, but the doers of evil shall be cast into the fire of hell. As for himself, Jesus is reported to have said that even on that day he would be one like unto other men. Turn to the Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 23, and read verses 42 and 43 :

> And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Again :

> But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matt., 26 : 29).

These texts show clearly that Jesus was a mortal, and that he will live in paradise like other mortals.

Jesus Lower than Angels

The following text which speaks of Jesus as

having been made lower than the angels, lends further support to the fact that he was a human being:

Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels (Hebrews, 2 : 9).

THE EFFECT WHICH JESUS PRODUCED ON HIS KITH AND KIN, AND DISCIPLES

How Jesus treated his Mother

Jesus' mother reprimanded him for his indifferent behaviour even when he was a young boy, saying: Son, *Why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing* (Luke, 2 : 48); whereon Jesus, rather than express regret and apologies, gave reply, from which it appears that on account of his excessive religious zeal there was left in him no respect or feeling of affectionate regard for his parents. His disrespect for his mother can likewise be seen from the following words in which he addressed her, on the occasion of a marriage celebration, saying: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* (John, 2 : 4). This statement evidently is devoid of all reverence and respect. But still more piquant and pungent was the allegation which Jesus had flung against his mother and near relatives, saying,

that since they walked not in the way of God's will and pleasure, his relation with them had altogether been snapped and that his near and dear ones were those who had accepted and believed in him. He said :

Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shalt do the will of my Father . . . the same is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matt., 12 : 48–50, Mark, 3 : 35 ; Luke, 8 : 21).

Jesus had indicated, in this way, that his mother and other relatives who had refused to accept his teaching, commanded no respect nor regard in his eyes.

Towards the close of his life, too, Jesus, while committing his mother Mary into the care of John, had accosted her in the same strain, saying:

Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! (John, 19 : 26-27).

It appears from this incident that there was, in the sight of Jesus and his disciples, no particular position for his mother Mary; for, otherwise, he would have felt no need of committing her to the care of his disciple. Moreover, the language employed by him on this occasion betrayed his

indifference and disregard towards his mother. These narratives produce no wholesome effect on the impressionable minds of the younger folk, nor does any good example of Jesus come before their eyes to emulate.

Effect on Other Relatives

They looked upon and regarded him as mad:

And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself (Mark, 3 : 21).

For neither did his brethren believe in him (John, 7 : 5).

These facts prove that Jesus failed to produce any good impression on the minds of his parents, brothers and sisters, and it was on this account that they refused to believe in him, and stood against him. If Jesus were God, his kith and kin, by their close contact, should have beheld in him signs of Divinity, but it is most surprising to find instead that they were not only not favourably impressed by him, but remained opposed to him to the end of his life.

All great men produce deep impression upon the minds of their companions and comrades, and those who come within the sphere of their influence, cannot be deeply impressed. On the other

hand, a man who cannot produce any good effect upon his companions cannot be said to be a man of great personality. It is recorded in the Gospel that Judas Iscariot, a disciple of Jesus, betrayed him into the hands of the enemy only for a paltry sum of thiry pieces of lucre; and Peter swore at and cursed Jesus, saying, *I know not this man.* We read in the Gospel according to John (13 : 26-27):

When he [Jesus] had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him.

Satan or greed, then, persuaded Judas to betray his Master into the hands of his enemies. In the same way, Jesus said unto Peter: *Get thee behind me, Satan.* This Satan, too, played false with his Master, and swore at and cursed him, saying, *I know not this man*:

He [Peter] began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak (Mark, 14 : 71).

This faithlessness and infidelity of the meanest kind was not limited to Judas Iscariot and Peter only, but other disciples, one and all, were birds of the same feather. When Jesus was struck down with calamity and affliction, and was extremely down-hearted, his disciples, seeing his

helplessness and despair, forsook him and fled, fearing that they, too, might be apprehended. Both Matthew (26 : 56), and Mark (14 : 50) have recorded: *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.* By their shameful and faithless conduct, the disciples proved unquestionably that Jesus' company could not illuminate their hearts with the light of knowledge and faith. Their faith was, as a matter of fact, so feeble and weak that even after crucifixion, when Jesus regained consciousness, he upbraided them for their littleness of faith and stone-heartedness. Turn to Mark (16 : 14), and read :

Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Of this disgraceful and disappointing treatment which he had received at the hands of his disciples, Jesus had made mention on many a previous occasion also:

And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? (Matt., 8 : 26).

O thou [i.e. Peter] of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (Matt., 14 : 31).

[Jesus] said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? (Matt., 16 : 8).

And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? (Mark, 4 : 13).

And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? (Mark, 4 : 40).

And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? (Luke, 9 : 41).

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not (Luke, 24 : 11).

And this sad state of affairs was witnessed when Jesus, having regained his consciousness after crucifixion, perceived and felt that even up to the last day of his life, his disciples had suffered from faithlessness and unbelief. Such were the disconcerting conditions which Jesus had to face and experience. It is not known whether it was due to the low mental level of the disciples that they could not assimilate and absorb Jesus' teaching, or whether Jesus himself was incapable of influencing them. One thing, however, is evident that there was not even an atom of Divinity in Jesus; otherwise such disconcerting conditions could never have arisen.

Disciples' Rebuke and Renunciation

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had

heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? . . . From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him (John, 6 : 60-66).

And Peter took him [Jesus], and began to rebuke him (Mark, 8 : 32).

The disciples rebuked Jesus, on another occasion as well, for he had allowed a woman of ill-repute to anoint his body with an ointment, saying that the precious ointment which had been wasted in that way could be sold, and the money so gained distributed among the poor. The reply which Jesus gave unto them was neither satisfactory nor desirable. He said:

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Mark, 14 : 9; also Matthew, 26 : 10-13).

To the Jews' objection that his disciples washed not their hands when they took meals, Jesus said that real purity was a matter of the heart, and that outward cleanliness was immaterial and insignificant. Upon this, *his disciples rebuked him and said:*

Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? (Matt., 15 : 12).

Jesus appears to have been a target of his disciples' rebukes; and this is not creditable.

IMPRESSION WHICH JESUS CREATED ON THE JEWISH MIND

Jesus' Uncivil Language

The causes which led the Jews to take up cudgels against Jesus may be listed as below :

(1) The sharpness and acrimony in his speech had reached such a high pitch that it proved too much for the Jews to put up with it. A few examples may be cited : Jesus said unto the Jews that they were not the children of Adam, but the brood of the Devil. This statement was highly provocative and painful.

(2) Jesus addressed the Jews over and over again, calling them *Serpents and a generation of vipers; hypocrites; an evil and adulterous generation*, etc., and proclaimed that they would be smitten with distress and destruction of every kind in this world, and the damnation of hell in the hereafter.

Undue Favour to an Adulterous

(3) Jesus showed undue favour to an unchaste woman who was caught red-handed committing

adultery; and it was obviously an open defiance of the Law of Moses. The Jews were highly offended to find the laws laid down in the Torah being flagrantly violated.

Anointed by a Harlot

(4) A woman of the town anointed Jesus' body with a precious ointment, and cleaned his feet with her hair, whereupon the Jews fell into a rage and said that he could not even know that she was a foul and fallen woman; and his disciples, too, took objection to it, saying, that the precious ointment could well be sold, and the money thus obtained distributed among the poor. But the reply returned by Jesus was not only unreasonable but undesirable:

> And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (Mark, 14 : 6-9; also Matt., 26 : 10-13).

VIOLATION OF THE SABBATH

(5) There was yet another objection which the Jews had against Jesus, that he did not observe the sanctity of the sacred Sabbath; and he said to them in reply:

The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath (Mark, 2 : 27).

NO EXTERNAL CLEANLINESS

(6) The Jews also took exception to the fact that his disciples took meals with unwashed hands, and Jesus said unto them in reply that the real purity was a matter of the heart and that the outward ceremonial practice was not of any worth or value (Matt., 15 : 10-11). This statement of Jesus was neither reasonable nor useful, for it destroyed all distinction between what was permissible and what was forbidden, and also cut across the very idea of external purity and cleanliness.

PLUCKING OF OTHERS' CORN

(7) His disciples entered, without permission, into the cornfields of the people, and plucked and ate the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, which was unlawful and forbidden. This was a double offence (Matt., 12 : 1-2).

Riding a Stolen Ass

(8) The Jews also remonstrated that Jesus had no right to send his disciples to snatch away an ass without the owner's permission, and that therefore Jesus mounted and rode a stolen ass (Matt., 21 : 2-3).

A Wine-bibber

(9) The Jews accused him, saying, that he was gluttonous and a wine-bibber (Matt., 11 : 19).

Jesus' Wishing Desolation of Jerusalem

(10) Jesus invoked curses for the desolation and destruction of Jerusalem which was the most sacred city of the Jews. This caused great mental pain and vexation to them. He was therefore responsible for arousing feelings of hatred and animosity against him in the minds of the Jews who could not tolerate open violation of the sacred laws of the Torah.

Accused of Calling himself the Son of God

(11) The Jews were greatly incensed and inflamed for the reason that Jesus called himself the Son of God which was blasphemy (Matt., 9 : 3; 26 : 65; Mark, 2 : 7; Luke, 5 : 21; John, 10 : 33). Jesus tried to explain as best as he could

that it was merely a metaphorical statement. He said that the Most High God even called them gods who communicated the Word of God to the people, saying: *Ye are gods; and all of you are the children of the Most High God* (Psalms, 82:6). But the Jews did not accept this interpretation.

Charge of High Treason

(12) The Jews alleged that Jesus claimed to be the inheritor of the throne of David, which meant that, although he lived within the domain of the Roman Empire, he had a design to pave the way for the establishment of a new government. They launched a vigorous propaganda against and provoked the wrath of the Roman Government against him. Jesus was charged, first, for the blasphemous claim that he was the Son of God, and, secondly, for his endeavours to establish a government of his own. On the insistence of the Jewish nation and their learned doctors, the Roman government ordered judicial trial of Jesus. He was arrested and produced in the court of law to answer the allegations levelled against him. He stated that to be called the Son of God was merely a figure of speech, so that in the Torah the learned doctors had even been called gods: *Ye are gods; and all of you are the children of the Most High*. With

regard to the other allegation, Jesus deposed that it was not his purpose to establish any earthly kingdom, but he wanted to set up a kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus recanted and explained that all men being children of God, he was one of them, and that he never meant to found a new government.

The Crucifixion

In this way, Jesus dissociated himself from both the claims, but the learned Jewish doctors refused to accept his explanation. They put strong pressure on Pilate who sat in judgement, to order the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate was, thus, obliged to pronounce the sentence of death against Jesus by being hanged upon the cross. Accordingly, Jesus was put upon the cross, his hands and feet nailed to it.

The Damned Death

Crucifixion was undoubtedly a matter of great triumph for the Jews. They proclaimed that, according to the Law of Moses, one who was killed upon the cross became accursed of God, and that one accursed of God was rejected and renounced by the Most High God. Jesus, therefore, the Jews contended, was accursed of God, condemned as a sinner of the worst kind, and cast into hell. Such is the fate of a false prophet, they said.

Disciples' Monstrous Interpretation

It was simply impossible for the disciples of Jesus to deny these heart-rending and humiliating events which had been witnessed and beheld by all the people. They were, however, stricken with gnawing grief and great distress, and they looked as if death had come upon them. These hard and harrowing facts, which had actually taken place before their eyes, could not be denied by them, but they hit upon and devised a plan of making these dreadful events the basis of their belief. They said that there is of course no gainsaying the fact that, according to the law of Moses, one who is killed upon the cross becomes accursed of God, and is reckoned among the sinners, and cast into the furnace of hell. They accepted all this but held that it was all done for the sake of their deliverance. In their view it was a Providential plan, in pursuance whereof Jesus, bearing the burden of the sins of humanity, bore a curse on himself, and was cast into hell.

Jewish Charge, the Basis of Christian Belief

It is indeed a matter for great regret that the false charges which the Jews had brought up against Jesus were not only admitted and acknowledged by the Christians, but were made the basis

of their belief, as shown below:

(1) He that is hanged is accursed of God (Deut., 21 : 23).

(2) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree (Galatians, 3 : 13).

(3) Then delivered he [Pilate] him [Jesus] therefore unto them to be crucified . . . . And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull . . . . Where they crucified him [Jesus], and two other with him, on either side one (John, 19 : 16-17).

(4) . . . they had crucified him . . . . And with him they crucify two thieves . . . . And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, . . . Save thyself and come down from the cross . . . . He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him (Mark, 15 : 24-32).

These texts of the Holy Bible prove beyond any doubt that one who is killed upon the cross becomes accursed of God, and is cast off from Divine Presence into the bottomless pit. It can thus be seen that current views held by the

Church run counter to and contravene the Word of God. That what constituted the condemnation of Jesus should become the fundamental principle of the Christian faith is simply inconceivable. The Christians in the face of these accusations and facts can never prove to the Jews the truthfulness of Jesus and his religion. The Christians should, therefore, consider this point seriously.

THE GOSPELS CONTRADICT CHURCH DOCTRINE

(1) Jesus Taken Down Alive from the Cross

It is very strange that even the Gospels annul the basis of the Christian faith on the doctrine of Jesus' damned death on the Cross, and state quite clearly that Jesus, when taken down from the Cross, was alive. He was, however, in a state of unconsciousness, and when his side was pierced with the sharp point of a spear, living red blood gushed out and streamed down—an indication that he was still alive. And how could he die by remaining on the Cross only for a few hours? One Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a counsellor of State and a disciple of Jesus, through his influence, obtained the wounded body of Jesus from Pilate, and laid him in that unconscious state in

a room-like tomb hewn out in the rock of his garden, and rolled a stone on to its entrance (Matt., 27 : 57-60).

(2) Forty Days after Regaining Consciousness

The spear of the soldier had already set the blood in circulation, and the fresh air of the garden helped Jesus regain consciousness. He stayed in that room only for one day, and the next day, fearing his recapture and, therefore, disguising himself as a gardener, he left the place. He spent forty days in hiding in the neighbourhood during which period he would at times suddenly appear among his disciples and would slip away as suddenly from there (Luke, 24 : 31).

(3) His Flesh and Bones

By showing his wounds to the disciples, Jesus tried to assure them that he was neither a demon nor any other evil spirit. He observed that a spirit hath not flesh and bones (Luke, 24 : 37-43); God Who is a spirit has neither bones nor flesh (John, 4 : 24). Now God is Incomprehensible and Unseen. Jesus did not possess these Divine qualities, to be looked upon as God or a spirit.

(4) Jesus' Picture in the Museums of Europe and America

Picture galleries of almost all European and

American museums have a picture of Jesus in common where blood is shown dripping down his body on to and near his feet. This picture clearly suggests that Jesus was alive, not dead, when taken down from the Cross. This fact, to which the whole Christian world is a witness, is quite enough to prove that the Church doctrine which has been based on the death of Jesus on the Cross is baseless, fanciful, and untrue.

CONCLUSION

From the texts of the Gospel made use of in the foregoing pages, the following truths shine forth conspicuously:

(1) Jesus taught with all the force at his command that the Most High God was the One True God, and He alone should be worshipped and adored (Matt., 4 : 10). He stresses:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength (Mark, 12 : 30).

And when the man whom he had addressed accepted and acknowledged this great truth, saying:

Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God; and there is none other but he (Mark, 12 : 32).

Jesus was happy and pleased with him that he had spoken discreetly, and gave him the glad tidings that with such a true belief *he was not far from the kingdom of God* (Mark, 12 : 34). Jesus further emphasised that to serve the One True God only and to love His Creatures were two such commandments of the Most High God whereon hanged all the Law and the prophets (Matt., 22 : 37-40).

(2) In this remarkable talk Jesus inculcated that his teaching was very much the same which had been inculcated in the Torah and the Books of the Prophets, and that when God is One and Only One, the teaching of the Prophets who had received light and guidance from the same Divine Source is also one and the same; and that his teaching was not different from what the Prophets had taught before, nor against it; and there could not, therefore, be any justification for the people not to believe in him. It is thus clear that Jesus did not hold it permissible to worship a stone, a tree, or a person, except the One True God.

(3) According to Jesus, little children are innocent and pure; they love goodness, and hate evil. He therefore exhorted the people to become, like children, sinless and pure (Matt., 19 : 13-15).

Jesus further enjoined upon the people to rise even above this state of sinlessness and purity, by imbuing themselves with the attributes of the Most High God (Matt., 5 : 48).

This rational and advantageous teaching of Jesus manifests the great truth that man is by nature pure and clean, that by remaining true and conforming to the rule of his nature he can live a life of peace and contentment, and that he can further develop his condition by imbuing himself with Divine qualities. In the light of such a charming and illuminating teaching, the irrational doctrine of Atonement is neither acceptable nor is it proper to ascribe it to Jesus Christ. Jesus, on the contrary, enjoins upon the people to be righteous ; for, it is only the righteous who will shine like the sun on the Day of Resurrection (Matt., 13 : 43) ; they will be installed on high, lofty positions as a recompense and reward for their good deeds. Jesus said that the righteous shall enter into life eternal (Matt., 25 : 46), which the unrighteous shall be denied. Moreover, the wicked are base and cowardly: "[they] flee when no man pursueth : but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs, 28 : 1), and strong as the great mountains (Psalms, 36 : 6). And it was for this reason

that Jesus laid great stress upon adopting the life of righteousness and good deeds. As for himself, Jesus said: *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me* (John, 4 : 34); *for, man shall live by the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* (Matt., 4 : 4). Jesus further said:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt., 7 : 21).

(4) As announced by Jesus himself, the purpose of his mission was to secure, for the benefit of the Children of Israel, the throne of his father, David, and to seek after and search the lost sheep of the House of Israel. His mission was definite and limited, and not meant for the entire mankind.

Jesus has declared that man is sinless and pure by nature; he has never said that the entire human race is sinful by birth, and that he had come to sacrifice his own life for their redemption. On the other hand, he has clearly taught in the Sermon on the Mount that it was by the adoption of a life of good deeds that man can get and reach the stage where he could be called the son of God (Matt., 5 : 9), and blessed with the happy eternal life (Matt., 5 : 10).

In contradiction to the Christian doctrines in vogue, the Holy Bible has installed man on a position of loftiness and elevation. In the Book of Genesis, Adam's dignity has been stated in very distinct and unambiguous terms, saying:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . . . and God created man in his own image (Genesis, 1 : 26-27).

In the same way, the Gospel according to St. Luke (3 : 38) has called Adam as the one loved by God: *Adam which was the son of God*. And of the two sons of Adam, Abel has been said to be righteous (Matt., 23 : 35). In the Book of Genesis (4 : 3-5) it has been stated that the Most High God accepted his offering, and that he was the first martyr; but Cain, the other son of Adam, turned out to be a malefactor. It should be clearly noted that if Adam were sinful by nature, Abel could not have been righteous and a dear one of God. The fact of the matter is that Adam was a near and dear one of God, and so became his son Abel. The contrast of the two sons of Adam clearly points to the fact that, among the progeny of Adam, there will be both good and bad people. Jesus accepts this without any reservation. He said: *He [God] maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good* (Matt., 5 : 45). That there are people both

good and bad among every nation and in every country, is a fact universally observed and accepted. Is it, therefore, right to condemn the entire humanity as sinful? The Holy Bible gives the names of some great and good personages besides Adam and Abel. About Israel the Most High God said: *Israel is my son, even my firstborn* (Exodus, 4 : 22), and with reference to Enoch, it was said:

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death . . . for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* (Heb., 11 : 5-6).

In the same way, it has been said of Melchisedec:

. . . first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; thou father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God (Hebrews, 7 : 2-3).

In respect of Anna St. Luke records (2 : 36):

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, . . . which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

Likewise, Joseph, the husband of Mary, has been spoken of as a righteous man (Matt., 1 : 19), and of another person, Simeon by name, it is written:

. . . there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just

and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him (Luke, 2 : 25).

About John the Baptist, Jesus said: *Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist* (Matt., 11 : 11). He turned many a heart towards God so that even harlots who led an immoral life, through the Baptist's teaching, got their way into Paradise. And in respect of the Baptist's parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, it is written in the Gospel:

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke, 1 : 6).

In short, according to the Torah and the Gospel, there have ever been in the world great and righteous personages; hence, the Church doctrine that the entire human species is besmeared with inherent sin stands obviously against the clear and categorical teaching of the Bible, as also against our daily observation This doctrine which condemns the whole human race as base-born and sinful is not only without any sense or argument, but is also defamatory and offensive. It is certainly the grossest injustice to ascribe and impute such a teaching to Jesus.

(4) Jesus was of course impaled upon the

Cross, but he did not die because of this. He had fallen into a state of complete unconsciousness; and it was after one day and two nights that he regained consciousness. That Jesus when taken down from the Cross was still alive, is borne out manifestly by the scarlet blood which gushed out of his side when a soldier pierced it with his spear. This testimony of the flowing blood can be witnessed even to-day: the painting of Jesus, with the blood dripping down his feet, hangs in the picture galleries of the Western world. This picture will ever continue to proclaim that Jesus certainly did not die upon the Cross and, therefore, the doctrine of Atonement which has its basis on the supposed death of Jesus on the Cross does not deserve to be considered a whit more than mere whim and fantasy. Moreover, this deleterious doctrine casts a slur on Jesus himself for it asserts that Jesus, bearing the burden of the sins of the whole human race, became himself accursed of God, and went into hell for three days (Galatians, 3 : 13). To call this true and righteous prophet of God as a man accursed and condemned to hell is indeed an insolence of the worst kind. It is simply inconceivable that a man who had been raised by the Most High God to keep off and save people from the furnace of hell fell into it himself.

BIRTH OF JESUS

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BIRTH OF JESUS

(Photo-reproduction of PART II & IV
from "JESUS IN HEAVEN ON EARTH")

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PART II

BIRTH

CHAPTER III

NAME, DATE AND PLACE

Name

According to a Biblical prophecy,[1] alleged to have been fulfilled in Jesus,[2] he was to be called *Immanuel* (God is with us), but he was never so called; and, according to his own utterance, at a most crucial moment in his life, instead of God being with him, he had, indeed, been forsaken by Him.[3] Isaiah also mentions the other name of *Immanuel* as *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*.[4] This name also was never applied to Jesus. So far as Jesus was concerned, therefore, this prophecy remained unfulfilled and, as I will show later, did not and could not apply to him.

As foretold to both Joseph and Mary, in separate apparitions,[5] the name should have been, and was in fact, *Joshua* (Aramaic : Jesu; Arabic : Isa) which in Greek is Jesus. Among the Jews of Palestine the name Joshua was exceedingly common. It was as if one were to be called *Karl* among Germans, *Louis* among Frenchmen, *Nicholas* among Russians and *Smith* or *George* among Englishmen. Jesus is also referred to in the Gospels as *Christ*, the Anointed; *Messiah*, the Wanderer; and *Nazarene*, the Warner. *Joshua* or *Jesu*, *Isa* or *Jesus* was his *name*, *Christ* his *designation*, *Messiah* his *descriptive rank* and *Nazarene* his *significant title* as a Prophet of God.

It has always been taken for granted that Jesus was called the *Nazarene* because he belonged to Nazareth. The declaration of the evangelists[6] on this point is so definite that even present-day commentators and historians have accepted it almost universally. But, like so many other Christian beliefs, it has no foundation at all.

The word *Nazarene* appears in the Gospels in three different forms : *Nazarenos*, *Nazoraios* and *Nazarenos*; which the evangelists have taken to be interchangeable. But none of these forms is capable of being derived from *Nazareth* : the *t* or *th* (Aramaic *tsade*), which is represented by the Greek letter *sigma* in Nazareth, makes it impossible to connect these three forms with Nazareth. Moreover, the Greek letter *zeta* in these three words points to the contrary.

The theory that the word *Nazarene* was merely to indicate that Jesus belonged to a sect of that name is equally devoid of force: for no one has so far been able to prove that this sect existed at the time of Jesus. The reference to the word *Naza*[illegible]

1 Isa., VII : 14.
2 Matt., I : 23.
3 Matt., XXVII : 46.
4 Isa., VIII : 3.
5 Matt., I : 20-21, Luke, I : 28-31.
6 Matt., II : 23, etc.

or *Netser*,[1] a branch, signifying the Davidic descent, an offshoot of the stem of Jesse, likewise has no application. Here, again, in both cases the presence of the letter *t* (*tsade* of Aramaic) and the absence of *zeta* will stand in the way. We will have, therefore, to look for another solution. In the word *Nazir* in Arabic (same in Hebrew, and Aramaic was only a dialect) we find the *zeta* of Greek, the *zain* of Hebrew or the *zal* of Arabic. *Nazir* means *holy*, *chosen*, *guard* or *warner*. Thus *Nazir* would be a fitting *title* for Jesus who was *holy* in character, a *chosen* man, a Prophet of God, a *guard* over the Lost Tribes of Israel and a *Warner* from God to them. The Greek equivalent of *Nazir* is *Hagios*: *the Holy one of God.*

Now, let us see if this word has been applied in this sense in the Gospels to Jesus In Mark we have an account of one of the first miracles of Jesus, the healing of a demoniac who, on seeing Jesus, exclaimed :

> What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the *Holy one of God*.[2]

In John we find Peter addressing Jesus thus :

> And we have believed and know that thou art the *Holy one of God*.[3]

In Luke the angel which appeared to Mary informed her :

> That the thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *holy*.[4]

I will quote but one more passage from the Acts :

> Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus the Nazarene a *man chosen of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourself also know.[5]

I have given the translation of the *Codex Syriac Sinaiticus*.

Similar passages[6] can be cited to show that the early Christians knew and applied the word *Holy One* to express the title of Jesus, and, at the same time, to impress upon the minds of others the idea of his character as the Messiah.

I have here only very briefly set out the grounds for holding that *Nazir* was the special descriptive title of Jesus. The compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* say :

> Therefore, *Nazarene* must have taken the place of some *title* of the Messiah. The right reading must be *Nazir*, the Holy One, which is the title of the Messiah.[7]

1 Isa., XI : 1; Jer., XXIII : 5.
2 Mark, I : 24; *cf.* Luke, IV : 34.
3 John, VI : 69; also see next note.
4 Luke, I : 35 : Both in Luke, I : 35, and John, VI : 69 the words used in the Authorised Version are, "the Son of God" and "Christ, the Son of the living God." But both these are subsequent additions. The texts given by me are according to the ancient MSS. See marginal notes on pages 1125 and 1177 of the *Revised Version*.
5 Acts, II : 22.
6 Acts, II : 27; Rev., III : 7.
7 *Enc. Biblica*, Col. 3360.

It is interesting to note that Professor L. Salvatorelli also came to the same conclusion, though on somewhat different grounds. In his wonderful work: *Il Significato di Nazareno*, he opined that the Promised Messiah must also bear this descriptive title of *Nazir*.

Date of Birth

As might be expected, we find also a good deal of confusion regarding the date and place of birth of Jesus. The dates for the chronology of his life group themselves round three points, the nativity, the baptism and the crucifixion. If any one of them could be settled conclusively the rest could be deduced. But, unfortunately, there is for none of them any demonstrative proof and no one can fix, with any certainty, the dates of any of these events.

Both Matthew and Luke place the birth during the reign of Herod, the King of the Jews. He reigned from 707 to 740 of the era of Vero, *i.e.*, from 37 B.C.E. to 4 B.C.E. Herod, according to Matthew some time, not more than two years, after the birth of Jesus, ordered the Massacre of the Infants, and, consequently, Joseph fled to, and remained in, Egypt for the rest of the King's life-time.[1] Thus, according to Matthew, Herod's death is the *terminus ad quem* for the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus must have, therefore taken place two or, if the period of Joseph's stay in Egypt and his journey is taken into consideration, three or four years before 4 B.C.E., the year of Herod's death: and it must, therefore, be placed between 8 to 6 B.C.E.

The appearance of the Star of the Magi causes further confusion. Voigt has proved that this star was really Halley's comet, which appeared in 12 C.E.[2] The compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* dismiss this incident by remarking:

> The star shines only in the legend and derives its origin from Numbers XXIV: 17 and the apocryphal imagery (Rev. XII: 1).[3]

Luke dates the birth of Jesus by a general census ordered by Augustus and carried out in Syria by the legate Qurinius,[4] but he also places, in the reign of Herod, an event which preceded it by six months, the birth of John the Baptist.[5] The only census carried out by Qurinius, as Governor of Syria, was in the reign of Augustus and could only have taken place after the deposition of Archelous in 6 C.E. This date (6-7 C.E.) is in point of fact also mentioned by Josephus.[6] In any case, this census would not have affected the Galileans, who were subjects of

1 Matt., II: 1, 13, 16, 19, 22.

2 Voigt, *Die Gesch Jesu und die Astrologie*, 611.

3 *Enc. Biblica*, Col. 808.

4 Luke, II: 1-2. The Authorised Version gives the name as *Cyrenius*.

5 Luke, I: 5, 24, 26, 57.

6 Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIII, 13: 2, 5.

Antipas. Luke, therefore, is not only in contradiction with Matthew but also with himself.

Dionysius Exigus, the sixth century Scythian monk, was the author of the Christian Era, which is sometimes called, after his name, the *Dionysian Era*. He has, however, never been relied upon as a sound mathematician, for he miscalculated the birth of Jesus and thus started the year of the Lord in 754 A.U.C. *i.e.*, 1 C.E.

The question is further complicated when we test the date of birth with the date of baptism. Luke says:

> Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa and Herod being tetrach of Galilee, . . Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.[1]

Tiberius ruled from 14 to 37 C.E. and, therefore, the event narrated by Luke must have taken place in 29 C.E. According to Matthew and Luke, the ministry of Jesus lasted for one year *i.e.*, up to 30 C.E. This gives the clue why the Dionysian Era fixed 1 C.E. as the year of birth of Jesus, for its author merely deducted thirty years, the age of Jesus given by Luke,[2] when his ministry started. But Luke mentions another event: the murder of John the Baptist. This happened during the ministry of Jesus.[3] The execution of John is also related by Josephus. He connected it with the defeat of Antipas by Aretas, who waged war because Antipas had divorced Aretas' daughter in order that he might marry Herodias. This took place about 36 C.E.[4] If we make allowance for the preparation of war, we can safely say that John was murdered in about 34 C.E. If this be correct the ministry of Jesus must have started later than 30 C.E. Again, Luke mentions that these events took place when Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. Annas was appointed high priest in 7 C.E. by Quirinius and deposed in 15 C.E. by Valerius Gratus.[5] Caiaphas on the other hand was appointed by Gratus in 18 C.E. and was removed by Vitellius, the successor of Pilate, in 37 C.E.[6]

Luke is not, therefore, a safe guide to follow, and any attempt to reconcile his statements with chronology is futile, and, in fact, would be to do this evangelist too much honour. "He wanted," says Schmidt, "to place Mary at Bethlehem, and therefore, time and circumstances had to suit his pleasure."[7]

It is equally futile to work out this date from the date of crucifixion. The Synoptics put the crucifixion on Friday, the

1 Luke, III: 1-2.
2 Luke, III: [illegible]
3 Luke, IX: 9-11.
4 Josephus, [illegible] XVIII [illegible] 1.
5 *Ibid.*, XVIII, II: 1-2.
6 *Ibid.*, XVIII, II: 2-3.
7 Schmidt, [illegible] *Exegese*, III . 1, S. 1-4.

15th of Nisan.[1] John places it on the 14th of Nisan.[2] We have, therefore, to find the year in which 14th Nisan fell on a Friday, because the Jewish Passovers always fell on the 14th of the first Jewish month and the Feast of the unleavened bread on the 15th of that month.[3] After making allowance for the intercalary month, we come to the Sabbatical year of 35-36 C.E., which may account for the three or four years of the ministry of Jesus as indicated by John in his reference to the three Passovers attended by Jesus.[4] The reference of Jesus to the fig tree for three years also supports John's version.[5]

The Synoptic Gospels speak of one visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and confine the ministry to one year. If John's version be rejected, it becomes inexplicable how Jesus, in the short span of the feast days in one year, could have brought himself into such decided hostility to the ruling party in Jerusalem that they contrived his arrest and death. John certainly is more convincing when he says that this hostility was gradually aggravated during his frequent visits. Besides, the Synoptics record an expression of Jesus which tells against their view. The words: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! . . . . *how often* have I gathered thy children together"[6] would be meaningless if he had seen Jerusalem once only during his ministry. Further, Jesus had no right to curse Jerusalem and its inhabitants if he had preached his Gospel to them for but a few days. All these presuppose many previous visits.

The date of crucifixion would therefore fall in about 35 C.E.

We can check our data by the fact that Pontius Pilate held office until 36 C.E. He was recalled, it is said, because of the crucifixion of Jesus. It would be natural that it should have occurred soon after the crucifixion. One or two years is not a long time to elapse, especially when it is said that Pilate had, in the first instance, to send his explanation to Cæsar. Pilate's successor Vitellius also removed Caiaphas, the high priest, in 37 C.E., because of the same event. Thus if the Matthean tradition regarding the date of the birth of Jesus is correct (as already indicated, *i.e.*, 8 to 6 B.C.E.) Jesus must have been 41 to 43 years old at the time of his crucifixion and must have started his prophetic career at about or over the age of forty. Irenaeus, who lived in the second century and was a Bishop of Lyons, noted that the Presbyters in Asia Minor had ascribed to Jesus an age of forty to fifty years. He also recorded a tradition, testified to by the elders and said to have been directly derived from "the beloved disciple of the Lord," to the effect that Jesus was not crucified at thirty years of age, but that he passed through every

1 Matt., XXVII: 62; Mark, XV: 42; Luke, XXIII: 54.
2 John, XIX: 31.
3 Lev., XXIII: 5-6.
4 John, II, 13-28; VII: 8-14; XI: 55.
5 Luke, XIII: 7.
6 Matt., XXIII: 37; Luke, XIII: 34.

age, and lived on to be an oldish man.[1] John records an incident which confirms this conclusion :

Then said the Jews unto him. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham.[2]

Taking for granted that the Jews were talking in round figures, Jesus must have been over forty years of age. Had he died in 29 C.E. he would have been between 30 and 40 years of age, and the Jews would have then said *forty* and not *fifty* years.

The birth of Jesus, therefore, took place in about 8 B.C.E., he started his ministry in about 32 C.E. and was put on the Cross in about 35 C.E.

The question regarding the date and month of the birth of Jesus is impossible to answer.[3]

1 Hær., II : 2 : 5, 1. 2 John, VIII : 57.

3 There is every justification for believing that the evangelists or subsequent redactors freely copied or reproduced events from the Mythus and presented them as *historical* in the Canonical Gospels. For the more hidden and uncertain the meaning or significance of the Gospel history, the more satisfactorily and easily it is explained by the Mythus : the more mystical the Christian dogma, the more clearly can it be proved to be mythical. It may, by way of illustration, be pointed out that the birth of *Christ* is really astronomical : and that his birthday can be determined by the full moon of Easter. This event, as illustrated by the Epact or the Golden Number of the Prayer Book, can only occur once in every nineteen years. Thus Jesus, or rather *Christ*, can, in accordance with the Metonic Cycle, have a birthday, or resurrection, only once in nineteen years.

Cassini, the renowned French Astronomer, has demonstrated that the date assigned to Jesus is an Astronomical epoch in which the middle conjunction of the moon with the sun happened on March 24, at half-past one o'clock in the morning, at the meridian of Jerusalem, the very day of the middle Equinox. The following day (the 25th) was the day of Incarnation according to Augustine, but the date of birth according to Clement. Thus two birthdays are assigned to Jesus by the Christian fathers : one at the Winter Solstice, and the other at the Vernal Equinox. These, which cannot both be historical, can only be explained by the two birthdays ascribed to the double Horus in Egypt. Plutarch has recorded that Isis was delivered of Horus, the child, about the time of the Winter Solstice, and that the festival of the second or adult Horus followed the Vernal Equinox.

Likewise is the difference in the date of the crucifixion. John asserts that it was on the 14th of the Nisan, while the Synoptics allege it to have occurred on the 15th Nisan. This difference can also be explained on the same basis. In lunar calculation it would be the 14th in a month of twenty-eight days, but in a solar month of thirty days, it must fall on the 15th of the month. If we unite the two on astronomical, and consequently on mythical, bases the difference disappears and is easy to understand.

Jesus' birth in the manger and the reference to the Caves remind one of the cave of Jupiter and other mythical gods. Mithras is said to have been born in a cave. But the *Cave of Mithras* was the birthplace of the Sun in the Winter Solstice, when this occurred on December 25, in the sign of the Ram. The Akkadian name the month, which roughly answers to December, as *Abba-uddu* that is the CAVE OF LIGHT. Justin Martyr says : "Christ was born in the stable, and afterwards took refuge in the cave," and he goes on to vouch for the fact that Christ was born on the same day that the Sun was reborn in *Stabulo Augiæ*, the stable of Augias. And we find that the stable and the cave both figure in the same Celestial sign of the Lion. Again, the birthday of Horus was figured in *Apta* : but *Apta* is

(*Continued on next page*)

Before I close this discussion, I must point out why the thirtieth year was fixed by Luke as the year of the commencement of Jesus' ministry. Dean Milman gives the excuse:

> The law prescribed the period of thirty years for assuming of the most important functions, and it was, therefore, not till he had arrived at this age that Jesus again emerged from his obscurity.[1]

In the Old Testament we find the age given between 30 to 50 years;[2] and of course, Luke could not make Jesus wait much longer, and he fixed the minimum years for the commencement of the ministry of Jesus.

Place of Birth

In the Gospels we have two contradictory versions regarding the birth-place of Jesus. Matthew and Luke, on different data, give Bethlehem-Judah as the place of his birth. Since Jesus was the Messiah, and tradition made it incumbent on the Messiah, a son of David, to have been born at Bethlehem Judah,[3] Matthew contented himself with an assertion that Joseph, the father of Jesus, belonged to Bethlehem-Judah. Now, if Joseph really belonged to Bethlehem-Judah, why should he have tried to seek shelter in an inn in that very town in preference to his own house? The truth is that Matthew was out to fulfil as many old prophecies in the person of Jesus as he could. The birth had to be in a cave,[4] Jesus had to be worshipped by the *angels* and the *asses*;[5] the visit of the shepherds from the field,[6] the vision for flight to Egypt,[7] in consequence of the Murder of the Infants[8]—all these and many other prophecies had to be fulfilled; and Matthew in his narrative had them fulfilled in Jesus. I will refrain from multiplying instances, as I have already touched upon the subject, and mentioned the birth in the manger. But whether it was for these or other considerations, Matthew found no difficulty in asserting that Joseph belonged to Bethlehem-Judah.

Luke attributed the journey of the family to Bethlehem-Judah because of the census of Quirinius, which, as I have already mentioned, did not take place in the time of Herod.

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also the name of the *Crib* and the *Manger*. The same incident is repeated with Christ. This is also pointed out by the Star in the East: and we are told that *Orien*, the Star of the Three Kings, also called the Star of Horus, rose in the East and guided people to the newly born Sun-god. This birth then passed into the sign of the Fishes. The Talmud also said that the coming Messiah will be called *Dag*, the Fish, and connected his coming with the sign of the Fishes. The evangelists or redactors made Jesus perform the miracle of the fishes to meet this demand. This discussion, though interesting in itself, is beyond the scope of this book, and I must leave it here. Those who wish to study the subject in greater detail would do well to read *The Sources of Christianity* by the late *Al-Haj Hazrat* Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

1 Milman, *Life of Christ*, 135.
2 Num., IV: 3, 47.
3 Micah, V: 1, 2; *cf.* Matt., II: 1.
4 Isa., XXVIII: 16.
5 Isa., I: 3.
6 Exod., XIII: 8.
7 Hos., XI: 1.
8 Jer., XXXI: 15; Exod., XIII: 15.

Both Matthew and Luke agree that the nativity took place during the reign of Herod, and this must be accepted. The reasons of Luke, therefore, for the journey of Joseph to, and the consequential birth at, Bethlehem Judah also disappear.

Christian apologists object that, if Joseph did not belong to Bethlehem-Judah, why did not Matthew, like Luke, create an excuse for the presence of the family at the crucial time in that town? The answer is a very simple one. Matthew knew what he wanted to establish and was better informed. To explain the real position, I must mention first that in Galilee there was a very small village called Bethlehem. It is mentioned in Talmudic literature as Bethlehem *en* Nosiriyyah, which according to the Old Testament fell to the lot of Zebulun.[1] This village was situated in the valley of Esdraelon, about seven miles north-west of Nazareth. While most evangelists correctly stated that Jesus was born at Nazareth, Matthew, for reasons already mentioned, took advantage of the fact that Joseph belonged to this Bethlehem, and stated in his narrative that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, knowing that the mere mention of this name would be construed as if Jesus was born in Bethlehem-Judah. While discussing the question the compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* say:

> Bethlehem, without any explanatory addition, was supposed to be the Southern Bethlehem, and the well-known narratives, so poetic, so full of spiritual suggestion in Matthew (Chapter II) and in Luke (II 1 20), which are not supported by any other Gospels, have arisen in consequence.[2]

I will now show from the evangelic and other records that Jesus was born in a small town in Galilee called Nazareth. In the *Evangelium de Nativitate de Maria* we are told that Joachim and Hanna (*or* Anna), the parents of Mary, lived in a small town called *Maiden en Nasara*,[3] or, as it has come down in Western history, Nazareth.[4]

This little town was cut off from the rest of the world, being far removed from the great "highways of the Seas" and the caravan routes. It was a peaceful Galilean town, half way up the hills, cultivating its own fields and orchards, busying itself in all manners of handicraft. It was, as it were, sunk into its own self-seeing visions, dreaming its dreams. This was a fitting place for the birth-place of a moralist and reformer, for his visions and dreams. It was to this town, her parents' old residence, where her sister lived, that Mary returned, from the village Bethlehem, to give birth to her first-born

1 Jos., XIX : 10-16.
2 *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 3362.
3 It was from this name that the epithet *Nasrani* originated; which has been and is till today applied to Christians by Jews and Arabs alike. Nazareth is called by the Arabs to this day *Nasara*.
4 The present city Nazareth does not stand on the site of the ancient town. It was destroyed and rebuilt at a place below the old town.

Nowhere in the New Testament, apart from Matthew and Luke, whose assertions have already been shown to be false, is the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem-Judah mentioned; nowhere does Jesus subsequently appear within his alleged birth-place; nowhere does he pay any visit, except on his last journey to Jerusalem; nowhere does he appeal to this fact as concomitant proof of his Messiahship although he had direct inducement to do so: for many were repelled from him by his Galilean origin and defended their prejudices by referring to the necessity that the Messiah should come out of Bethlehem-Judah, the city of David.[1] Insults were flung to his face, his mission was being denied: the disputants were challenging:

> Can there any good come out of Nazareth?[2]

And again,

> Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.[3]

But he never asserted his being a Bethlehemite, and only complained:

> A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and his own house.[4]

John records an incident which throws a flood of light on the subject. When certain people heard Jesus preach, they said:

> Of a truth this is the prophet. This is the Christ, but some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not scriptures said that Christ cometh out of the seed of David and out of *Bethlehem* the village where David was. So there arose a division among the multitude regarding him.[5]

I have quoted from the Syriac manuscript to show that it was acknowledged by all that Jesus had come out of Bethlehem in Galilee. It may be explained that amongst Jews the residence town of a father was always attributed to be also that of the son. The denial of his mission was pointedly based on this fact, so much so that it caused a division among those present at the time. John must have accepted the fact that Jesus was born in Galilee and not at Bethlehem-Judah, for he also, like Jesus, did not try to contradict those who asserted otherwise.

Mark directly gives us to understand that Jesus was born in Galilee. It is true that he does not name the town, but since Jesus was wandering at the time when he is said to have preached in "his own country,"[6] it is clear that Mark styled Galilee as "his own country." Luke from the very beginning gives

1 John, VII: 42. See also Mica., V: 1-2; Jer., XXIII: 5, Ps., CXXXII: 11.
2 John, I: 46.
3 John, VII: 52.
4 Matt., XIII: 57; Mark, VI: 4.
5 John, VII: 40—43. See margin of Revised Version, p. 173. The Authorised Version uses the phrase "out of the town of Bethlehem."
6 Mark, VI: 1. The proper translation is "*his native place.*"

Nazareth as the abode of Mary.[1] It was to this place, when circumstance permitted, that the parents of Jesus returned as *their own city*.[2] Thus, according to Luke, Nazareth is evidently the native place of Jesus.

Matthew says Jesus was born at Bethlehem-Judah; no doubt, as already stated, to fulfil a prophecy. But he is in conflict with himself for he speaks of the prophetic advent of Jesus in Galilee,[3] basing his claim on the well-known passage in Isaiah.[4] Besides, if Joseph belonged to Bethlehem-Judah, as Matthew would have us believe, he has no right to call Nazareth, as he does, the home of Joseph[5] like his predecessor was able to do.[6]

Now and again, Jesus is spoken of in the Gospels as Jesus of *Galilee*,[7] Jesus of Nazareth,[8] and sometimes as Jesus, Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee,[9] but never as Jesus of Bethlehem-Judah or as the Bethlehemite. There are various passages which speak of Galilee as Jesus' "own country."[10]

It is from Nazareth that he set out to meet John the Baptist.[11] Nazareth is the place from which he goes out to preach [12] and returns to it time and again.[13] In short, as Luke says, Nazareth was *his own city*, the city in which he was born and brought up.[14]

Before concluding this chapter, I will quote a passage from the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* wherein its compilers are compelled to admit that:

> The discrepancies of the evangelists compel us to make some hypothesis: Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem-Judah, and the transmitters made a mistake—some said Bethlehem and some said Nazareth.[15]

It is, therefore, evident that the evangelical statement that Jesus was born in Bethlehem-Judah is destitute of all valid evidence; nay it is contravened by positive facts as stated in the Gospels themselves.

1 Luke, I: 26.
2 Luke, II: 39.
3 Matt., II: 23; IV: 14-15.
4 Isa., VII: 14; *cf.* Ju., XIII: 5. It would be an interesting pastime to trace all the strained coincidences in the life of Jesus, with the prophecies of the Old Testament: but which by themselves, because of this peculiarity, do not inspire the least confidence in the incidents which they are supposed to corroborate.
5 Matt., XIII: 54, 57.
6 Mark, VI: 1.
7 Matt., XXVI: 69.
8 Matt., XXVI: 71; Luke, IV: 34.
9 Matt., XXI: 11
10 Matt., XIII: 54, 57; Mark, VI: 1, 4; Luke, II: 39.
11 Matt., IV: 13; Luke, II: 43.
12 Matt., III: 13; Mark, I: 9.
13 Matt., IX: 1; Luke, II: 51.
14 Luke, IV: 16.
15 *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 3361.

CHAPTER IV

DAVIDIC DESCENT

The first and the third Gospels, which give details of the virgin birth, are also designed to exhibit the descent of Jesus from David. They contain two genealogies of Jesus. The belief that the blessed son of Jehovah, the Messiah, had to be from the *seed* of David was a religious postulate based on some Biblical prophecies.[1]

Joseph, the humble father of Jesus, was made to be in a direct line to the King chosen of old by Jehovah. There was no question of finding out if such a relationship did exist, or could be proved to exist, or even made to appear plausible. The hagiographers did not trouble themselves with such details or scruples. They had to establish that the prophets of old were not false and did not take the trouble of verifying whether they did really say what was being attributed to them. The prophecies found in the "Old Book" had to be fulfilled. Jesus was the Messiah and evidence of his descent from David was created. The sceptics demanded proof, and as there was none in existence, they put forward the two genealogies, taking names of generations, as far as they could, from the "Old Book" and where it would not help them, they resorted to their own resourceful imagination.

These two genealogies, considered each in itself or both together, afford so important a key to the character of the evangelic records that a close examination of them is rendered imperative. A moment's scrutiny of the genealogy of Matthew will reveal its artificiality, in fact, it is exhibited in the last verse:

> So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.[2]

In other words, for reasons unknown, the author has constructed a framework which has no historical basis and thus made it as he thought fit. If the number of names given is computed, it is found that the last division, from Jechonias to Jesus, comprises only thirteen generations. It has been suggested that one of the names in the third division had been dropped by an error of a transcriber;[3] but this cannot be a sound explanation because the deficiency was mentioned at an early stage by Porphyry.[4]

1 Ps., CXXXII: 11; Isa., XI: 1; Jer., XXIII: 5.

2 Matt., I: 17.

3 Paulus, *Comm: Matt.*, 292.

4 *Hieyon in Daniel*, 145.

If we compare this genealogy with the corresponding passages in the Old Testament, we discover many discrepancies; many names there recorded are omitted by Matthew. The series of generations from Abraham to Judah, Pharez and Esrom (Hezron) are sufficiently well known from the Book of Genesis; and from Pharez to David are to be found at the end of the Book of Ruth, and from David to Zorobabel in the third Chapter of the same Book.

Now Matthew's first division of fourteen is identical with the names of *men* given in the Old Testament. But many discrepancies are found in the second division. Firstly, according to Matthew, "Joram begat Ozias,"[2] whereas we know that Uzziah was not the son, but the grandson of Joram, and that three kings —Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah occur between them—and then comes Uzziah.[3] Secondly, Matthew says: "Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren,"[4] but according to the Old Testament the son and successor of Josiah was Jehoiakim,[5] after whom comes his son and successor Jeconiah, and no mention is made of his brethren. Jehoiakim, however, had brethren. This is not a case of accidental forgetfulness or casual inaccuracy; Matthew has simply cut out anything which interfered with his plan. Thirdly, Zorobabel is described as a son of Salathiel,[6] but according to the Old Testament he descended from Jeconiah, not through Salathiel, but through his brother Pedaiah.[7]

It is, however, the omission of the three names which—for it falls in so happily with the threefold fourteen generations—forces us to believe, with Jerome, that it was made with a definite purpose.[8] Olshausen is unconvincing when he conjectures that the number fourteen was specially chosen as being the numerical value of the name of David. Fritsche attributes it to a desire to repeat the number fourteen which had accidentally presented itself, since it was a notion of the Jews that signal divine visitations, whether of prosperity or adversity, recurred at regular periodical intervals. De Wette and Schneckenburger agree with this conclusion of Fritsche and the latter points out that the most ancient genealogies in Genesis exhibit the same uniformity. The conclusion is irresistible that it is not a case of accidental forgetfulness or casual inaccuracy.

The author of the First Gospel has deliberately cut out anything that interfered with the symbolic structure of fourteen generations into the second and third divisions, irrespective of the fact whether history supported him or not.

The author of Luke is equally indifferent to facts of history. His genealogy comprises seventy-seven names, with God at one

1 Ruth, IV: 18-22.
2 Matt., I: 8.
3 I Chron., III; 11-12. Here as in 2 Kings, XIV: 21 Uzziah is called Azariah.
4 Matt., I: 11.
5 I Chron., III: 15.
6 Matt., I: 12.
7 I Chron., III: 19.
8 *Bible Common.*, 46. n.

end and Jesus at the other. This genealogy cannot, unfortunately, be tested so minutely; for, from David to Nathan, the line traced by Luke has no corresponding table in the Old Testament; and we do not know from where he got these names. With regard to only two of them—Salathiel and Zorobabel—there is a contradiction. Luke styles Salathiel as the son of Neri[1] while he is actually the son of Jeconiah.[2] Luke mentions Rhesa as the son of Zorobabel[3] but that name does not appear in the Old Testament amongst the children of Zorobabel.[4] These two names could not be omitted by either Matthew or Luke because they were indissolubly connected with the Return. Again, Luke inserts in the series before Abraham one Cainan[5] who is not to be found in the Hebrew text of Genesis[6] though in another place[7] he is shown as the son of Ham, that is, the third series from Adam, and appears to have been transplanted to this place by Luke from the Greek Bible.

On comparing the two genealogies together some remarkable discrepancies appear on the face of them; some of which are due to the fact that Luke carries the line back to Adam and even beyond. This seems to have been done to make it more consonant with the doctrine of Paul. If we consider the generations between David and Jesus only, the number of generations according to Luke is forty-one and according to Matthew twenty-six. From Jesus to Abraham, Luke enumerates fifty-six generations; Matthew gives only forty.

Again, in the two Gospels totally different individuals are made ancestors of Jesus. Further, except for the fact that both trace the descent of Jesus from David through Joseph, described as the *father* of Jesus, the entire names given by the two between David and Joseph are different—the only exceptions are Salathiel and Zorobabel, which as already pointed out, could not be omitted. In Matthew the father of Joseph is Jacob, in Luke—Heli. In Matthew the son of David is Solomon; in Luke Nathan, and so on.

The most strenuous efforts have been made to reconcile the two genealogies. It would serve no useful purpose to discuss or examine in detail the various solutions so far put forward.

Julius Africanus suggested a Levirate marriage between the parents of Joseph; Augustine the adopted father theory but later on he gave up his own theory for that of Africanus.[8] Schneckenburger in rejecting both these theories rightly pointed out that the wording used in the genealogies excluded all possibility of either of the two suggestions. The Levirate marriage, he contended, could only be possible if both Heli and Jacob had been [illegible] brothers. They must therefore have the same lineage.

1 Luke, III: 27.
2 I Chron., III: 17.
3 Luke, III: 27.
4 I Chron., III: 19.
5 Luke, III: 36.
6 Gen., X: 6 (Revised Version
7 Gen., IX: 22.
8 *Retract*, II: 17.

but this is not borne out by the genealogies. Eusebius had put forward a really clever solution. He asserted that Jacob and Heli were half-brothers.[1] If this were so, the paternal grandmother of Joseph must have married twice: once with the Matthan of Matthew, who had descended from David through Solomon; and her second husband must have been the Mattatha of Luke—a descendant of David through Nathan. If this be so, the untoward agreement occurring midway, regarding Salathiel and Zorobabel, cannot be accounted for without introducing another Levirate marriage at these two junctures. This has only to be mentioned to be rejected and thus this theory also falls to the ground. It was not until the 15th century of the Christian era that it was thought that the knot could be loosened in a much easier way by supposing that in one of the Gospels the genealogy of Mary is given.[2] This theory was based on the idea that in Jesus the priestly and the kingly dignity ought to unite, and advantage was taken of the relationship of Mary with Elisabeth who was of the daughters of Aaron[3] and thus an effort was made to blend, in the family of Joseph, the races of Judah and Levi. It was, therefore, put forward that Jesus derived his royal lineage from Joseph and priestly race through Mary.[4] But it was soon realized that an insurmountable obstacle—the Jews did not take account of the female line in their genealogies[5]—prevented any fruitful discussion, particularly when the thirty-four preceding generations, which are well known to us from the Old Testament, demonstrably indicate throughout the precise relationship of a *father*. A further difficulty, as already mentioned, is encountered in the occurrence of the two names of Salathiel and Zorobabel. Moreover, in no other part of the New Testament can any trace be found of the descent of Mary through David On the contrary, passages directly opposed to this theory can be found in Luke.[6] It is, therefore, impossible to apply either of the genealogies to Mary.

These considerations of the insurmountable difficulties which defy every attempt to bring these genealogies into harmony with one another force one to the conclusion that they are irreconcilable, and consequently both cannot be true. For reasons already given Matthew's version must be rejected as incorrect Luke, however, must be scrutinized more carefully inasmuch as it was written with a view to glorify Jesus and trace his descent from God himself. It is incredible that the genealogy of an insignificant and obscure family like that of Joseph through Nathan could have been preserved, during all the confusion of the exile, for so long a series of generations. Add to this the frequent recurrence of the same names and the conclusions of

1 Eusebius, Ecc. *Hist* I : VII, 16.
2 Olshausen, *Bible Comm.*, S. 48. Epiphanius, Grotius, S. 97.
3 Luke, 1 : 5.
4 Comp. Thilo Cod, Apocr. N. T. I. S. 374.
5 Juchasin, F. 55 : 2.
6 Luke, 1 : 27 ; 11 : 4-5.

Hoffmann become irresistible that the genealogy of Luke is equally fictitious.

In fact, the two genealogies remain self-contradictory and irreconcilable, resembling each other only in their common indifference to historical truth and the object of proving that Joseph, the *father* of Jesus, had, as was expected by Israel, descended from David.

It is significant that we find in the texts no indication that the Messiahship of Jesus was ever deduced from his Davidic descent. The process was just the reverse; the disciples first believed that Jesus was the Messiah and then made him a descendant of David by putting forward these genealogies. Thus an obscure Galilean, for such was Jesus, whose lineage was utterly unknown and of whom consequently no one could prove that he had or had not descended from David, had acquired the reputation of being the Messiah. It was natural, therefore, that with slightly different material the two evangelists should have succeeded in realizing the same purpose, namely, to vindicate the Messianic status of Jesus by proving that he, through his *father* Joseph was a member of the house of David. The belief in this illustrious descent was very old. Even Paul knew and accepted that Jesus was born "of the seed of David, according to the flesh."[1] He had to be "the fruit of the loins of David."[2]

But the Davidic descent of Jesus can be impugned on other grounds. Jesus never boasted of it; nor did his disciples regard him as such. Neither the appeal of the blind man of Jericho: "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me,"[3] nor the acclamation on his entry to Jerusalem,[4] can have the least weight against this double silence of Jesus and his companions. Another, and even more important, objection is that the author of the fourth Gospel does not accept the descent of Jesus from David. The objections raised about the Davidic descent are not answered or refuted by this evangelist,[5] and this fact proves that he did not think either of these things to be true. But these considerations did not weigh with the other two evangelists.

The Ebionites, the ancient Judo-Christians, rejected these genealogies[6] and their opinion appears to be justified by the oldest traditions.

It is, therefore, evident that the belief in the Davidic descent of Jesus found acceptance only amongst a few of the early Christians.

The only fact which stands out signally in the two genealogies, and which remains uncontradicted, is that Jesus was the son of Joseph and his wife Mary. I will presently show that this fact finds ample support in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament.

1 Rom., I: 3.
2 Acts, II: 29-30. *Cf.* Ps., CXXXII: 11.
3 Mark, X: 47.
4 Mark, XI: 9-10.
5 John, VII: 40-42.
6 Epiphanius: *Hær*; 30: 14.

CHAPTER V

SON-GOD THEORY

I will not discuss the wonders with which Matthew and Luke adorn their accounts of the Nativity, for they are sheer hagiography. I have already mentioned that the appearance of the miraculous star, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt and the Massacre of the Infants, on the one hand; the birth in the stable, the announcement to the Shepherds in the field, the presentation in the Temple, on the other, form groups of incidents which it is futile to endeavour to blend into one, and still more futile to connect in history.

The redactors have merely sought to make up for their lack of knowledge of facts by introducing narratives founded either on supposed prophetic writings, or upon the then popular myths and folklore. They were faced with a peculiar situation. They naturally wished to avoid, as far as possible, the ridiculous, and yet did not like to relinquish the supernatural origin of Jesus; likewise they were conscious of the fact that a natural explanation would lead to conclusions which would be revolting to the faith. They, therefore, preferred the adoption of the mythus, as this alone could obviate the difficulty.

Not only are Pagan gods known in Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian mythologies to have been raised by virgin birth, but many peculiar incidents have been attributed to them as were ascribed to Jesus. In fact, the substantial identity of Christian and Pagan beliefs was actually used, at a very early stage, as a method of overcoming Pagan criticism of Christian teachings. Thus Justin Martyr, writing in defence of Christianity in the first half of the second century, said :

> By declaring our Master Jesus Christ to be born of a virgin without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead and to have risen again, and ascended into heaven, we say no more in this than what you say of those whom you style the Sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a number of sons the writers among you assign to Jove. Mercury, the interpreter of Jove, is worshipped among you. You have Æsculapius, the physician stricken by a thunderbolt, and who afterwards ascended into heaven. You have Bacchus torn to pieces and Hercules burnt. You have Pollux and Castor, the Sons of Jove by Leda, and Perseus by Danae. Not to mention others, I would fain know why you always deify the emperors, and have a fellow at hand to testify that he saw Cæsar mount to heaven. As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be no more than man, yet the title of the Son of God is very justifiable on account of his wisdom, considering you have your Mercury in worship under the title of the Logos and the Messenger of God. As to the objection of our Jesus being crucified, I say that suffering was common to all the fore-mentioned Sons of Jove, only they suffered another kind of

death. As to his being born of a virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that. As to his curing the lepers, and the paralytic and such as were cripples from their birth, this is little more than what you say of Æsculapius.

Eusebius, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, had also to appeal to a pagan oracle in similar circumstances and was forced to write to the heathen in the same strain :

But thou at least listen to thine own gods, to thy oracular deities themselves, who have borne witness and ascribed to our Saviour, not imposture, but piety and wisdom, and ascent into heaven like theirs.

Bishop Gore, a *Modernist*, writing on the same subject in recent times to the adversaries of Christianity, said :

You say that we find in Christianity the relics of Paganism. On the contrary, we find in Paganism, intermingled with much that is false, superstitious and horrible, the anticipation of Christianity.[1]

There was a time when Church dignitaries were bent on discovering more striking and more startling coincidences in pagan and primitive religions for use as "rays of confirmation of Gospel truths." But this study of comparative mythology soon lost much of its charm. Professor Max Muller says :

The opinion that the pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempts to explain Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew.[2]

The Christian dogmas—the idea of a Triune Godhead, of an Incarnate Saviour, of the Virgin Birth, of the Second Advent, of the Baptism, of the Sacraments, of the Communion of Saints—were taken for granted to be the distinctive possessions of Christianity; these were, it was alleged, marks clearly dividing it from any form of Paganism. So, at least, it was contended at one time by Christians on the authority of Holy Writ. But they were shocked to find that they were completely mistaken. To their utter dismay every one of these dogmas and rituals was proved to have been held in some part or other of the Pagan world quite independently of Christian influence. They, therefore, to save their faces and religion, took a new turn and treated them as supporting the Christian Dogmas. To borrow a phrase of Paul, these ancient rites and beliefs, obscured by superstition and insufficient to satisfy the longing which brought them into existence, were designed "to serve as the schoolmasters" who would lead the heathen at length to Christ.

The subject of comparative mythology and the considerations of concrete parallels between the beliefs and teachings of ancient religions and those of Christianity is vast indeed. I cannot enter upon it. The late *Al-Haj Hazrat* Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din has discussed this subject exhaustively in his well-

1 Gore, *Studies in the Character of Christ*, II : 102.
2 Muller, *The Science of Religions*, 40.

known work, *The Sources of Christianity.* I may, however, mention that the celebrated text of the three witnesses of John, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, has also been proved, by the labours of Newton, Porson and others, to be an interpolation; and Clement himself acknowledged that the verse is *not found in any ancient copy of the Bible.* "Jesus," he said, "taught the belief in One God, but Paul with the Apostle John, who was a Platonist, despoiled Christ's religion of all its beauty and simplicity by introducing the incomprehensible Trinity of Plato, or the Triad of the East, and also deifying two of God's Attributes—namely His Holy Spirit, or the *Agion Pneuma* of Plato and His Divine Intelligence, called by Plato the Logos (word)."

With this background, it is possible to see where the Son-God theory came from. It is significant that Paul, John and Mark, none of whom believed in the virgin birth, characterised Jesus as the Son of God. This description of Jesus, therefore, must be held to be prior to the establishment of the belief in the miracle mentioned by Matthew and Luke, and their assertions consequently do not arise out of it. On the contrary, the miracle followed the assertion of Paul. For as soon as they thought that not only had Jesus been raised up by God as a man full of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His plans and that his birth into this life had been Divinely predestined and glorified by the Holy Ghost, they attempted to signalise it by expressing this special relationship between Jesus and God. They described him as His son, because that was the only term in human language by which they could intelligibly, if not completely and adequately, express this relationship. Since the idea of the direct generation of a man by God could not appear to the Jews except as a monstrous absurdity, the expression was, in the first instance, only a metaphor.

It must, however, be conceded at once that the evangelists used the expression the *Son of God* in its literal sense It appears in the Synoptic Gospels twenty-seven times and the word *Son* in what may further be conceded in an equivalent sense, nine times. Of course, the numerical figure appears to be higher than it actually is because the same more or less identical passages are repeated in all three Gospels. The expression, however, is conspicuously used in all the most important events narrated in the Gospels : The Baptism,[1] the Temptation in the Wilderness,[2] the Transfiguration,[3] the Interrogation by the high priest,[4] the Declaration of the Centurion at Calvary [5] and lastly the Confessions of the devils and demons whom Jesus cast out.[6]

1 Mark, I : 2.
2 Matt., IV : 3.
3 Mark, IX : 7.
4 Mark, XIV : 61.
5 Mark, XV : 39.
6 Matt., VIII : 29; Mark, III : 11; V : 7.

All this kind of fantasy, in which the expression is used by a voice of heaven alternating with hell, brings under suspicion everything connected with it, particularly as most of the passages, as already mentioned, are spurious. I mention but one: Mark was headed by someone: The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the *Son of God*.[1] This descriptive title was a much later addition.[2]

It is noteworthy, however, that this expression occurs *once* only in the *Quelle*, in a famous legend which is reproduced in the Gospels[3] and the significance of which I will discuss later on. In the Acts and the Pauline Epistles this appellation occurs in numerous places, but it finds no place at all in the Pastoral Epistles of James, Jude and I and II Peter

It has been asserted that so numerous references as are found in the New Testament prove conclusively that Jesus himself took the expression the *Son of God* in its most strict and exalted significance. In other words, it is urged that the mere repetition of a lie must carry the force of conviction and convert it into and establish its truth.

The title in question, if taken literally, expresses a relation with God so intimate that no mere man could lay claim to it. It comprises a definite, if not perfectly lucid, explanation of the mystery of the Trinity, for it defines the second person of the Triad. A mere assertion, therefore, even by Jesus himself, is not enough to reveal the true position. It must be shown to have been understood by those who were to be enlightened.

Now this expression was known to, and used by, Israel. In principle all Jews were sons of Jehovah, and it was this which distinguished them from the rest of mankind. In the Old Testament all human beings have been called the *sons of God*.[4] The Israel, in particular, were styled as the son of God (My son),[5] the sons of God (My sons),[6] and the children of the Lord.[7] This appellation was especially applied, as it was throughout the ancient East, to outstanding personages, the Prophets of God, because of the love which God bore them and the tutelary care which He exercised over them. During the post-exilic period, pious men and teachers were regarded as the sons of God.[8] From the Second Psalm we gather that, just as earthly kings chose their sons to reign with or under them, so the Israelitish kings were invested by Jehovah, the Supreme Ruler, with

1 Mark, I: 1.
2 Revised Version, p. 1098.
3 Matt., XI: 27; Luke, X: 22.
4 Gen., VI: 1-4; Job, 1: 6; Dan., III: 25.
5 Exod., IV: 22.
6 Isa., XLV: 11, Hos., 1: 10.
7 Deut., XIV: 1; Isa., I: 2; Jer., III: 22.
8 Heit Muller, *Jesus*, 123; see also Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci*: 6.

governments of his favourite provinces. Thus the designation the *Son of God* was applicable to every Israelitish king who adhered to the principles of theocracy. In the Second Psalm we find the verse which according to Codex D plays an important part in the baptism of Jesus:

> Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.[1]

This was nothing more than a part of the liturgy of the coronation rites of the Hasmonean kings.[2]

In all these cases, therefore, there never was any idea of expressing anything more than a close moral and religious connection with God than was, or is, enjoyed by ordinary human beings. There could be no question, even remotely, of any real sonship for the Jews, for that would have been to them the most preposterous absurdity and the grossest blasphemy. Thus at the time of Jesus, the expression *Son of God* was applied to one of two types: those who by their essential nature enjoyed a unique relationship with God—the heavenly kings, the Prophets; and the earthly kings, the Princes.

It is true that Israel expected the Messiah, whose coming they so ardently desired and awaited with high hopes, to set up a kingdom on earth and to be their redeemer. It is equally true that the Messiah was commonly described by them as the best beloved son of God and the most powerful vicegerent of God on earth, but he was to be a *man among men*[3] and not a single passage in Jewish literature can be cited in which the title is given to the Messiah in the sense the Christians take it to be. By sheer dint of straining the texts, which do not carry conviction to any one except those who are already convinced, two passages are put forward. The first passage is:

> Because I and my son will be with you always on the paths of truth.[4]

This passage has been proved, and is now universally admitted, to be an interpolation. The only other passage in which the words "For my son Christ........"[5] occur is also a later text which is now to be found only in Christianized recensions.

If, then, such was the original historical significance of the epithet, it is not unreasonable to say that Jesus used it of himself in this significance only. It is true that the two verses in the Gospels can be stretched to mean something different. I will consider them presently. But apart from these two verses, nowhere is the narrowest, the merely physical, import of the term put into the mouth of Jesus. It is always others who

1 Ps., II : 7; *cf.* Luke, III : 22.
2 Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 8.
3 Justin, *Dial Cum Typho*, 49
4 Enoch, CV : 2.
5 4 Edros, VII : 28-29.

apply this title to Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, throughout his teachings, tenaciously maintained a distinction between himself and God. He clearly and repeatedly pointed out that he was only a human teacher and that Divine Attributes ought not to be applied to him. When tempted by Satan, who asked him to do various things if he was the son of God, Jesus drove him away by saying :

> Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only thou shall serve.1

When asked which was the first and great commandment in Law, Jesus said :

> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.2

Jesus even renounced the predicate of goodness and insisted on its appropriation to God alone. When addressed as *Good Master* he replied :

> Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.3

So precise was Jesus that he even put his status lower than that of the Holy Spirit, for he said :

> And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.4

Jesus knew and understood the metaphorical significance of the term : *The Children of God*;5 and when he spoke of himself as one of them, he applied the term in its metaphorical and not physical sense. This is abundantly clear from the following incident recorded in the Gospels :

> Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them : Many good works have I showed you from *the Father*; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou being a *man* makest thyself God.

> Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your Law : *I said, ye are gods*? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, whom *the* Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest because I said I am a son of God.6

These verses, occurring as they do in John, speak for themselves and a comment is hardly necessary. Jesus was quoting

1 Matt., IV : 10.
2 Matt., XXII : 37.
3 Matt., XIX : 17; Mark, X : 18; Luke, XVIII : 19.
4 Matt., XII : 32.
5 Matt., V : 9.
6 John, X : 31-36. I have used *the* in place of *my* and *a* in place of *the* as given in the Revised Version, p. 1184.

from the Psalms:

> I have said, ye are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High 1

and arguing that if the Judges, as God's representatives, could be called "gods"[2] or *sons of the Most High*, by God Himself, he could not possibly be guilty if he spoke of himself as *a* son of God in that metaphorical sense. Christian apologists have spilt oceans of ink to explain away the incompatibility of these verses with their Son-God theory and to establish that "these verses neither imply any degradation of the Divinity of Jesus nor do they present Jesus to be a mere man"

But I repeat that Jesus was very precise in this matter. He always spoke of himself as the *Son of Man*. This expression, as I will show later, meant a mere man, and those who heard Jesus took him to be *a man*[3] and nothing more. He even spoke of himself as *a man* for he said:

> But now ye seek to kill me, *a man* that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham.[4]

Jesus also spoke of himself as a Prophet,[5] and indeed those who listened to him took him to be a Prophet[6] and a teacher.[7] Even his disciples took him to be a Prophet only.[8] Peter, it is true, when questioned by Jesus as to what he thought of him, replied: *Thou art Christ*, the son of the living God,[9] but Jesus not only then and there contradicted him by using the phrase *Son of Man* for himself[10] but he also repudiated vehemently this appellation, for:

> He straightly charged them and *commanded* them to tell no one that thing.[11]

I need hardly repeat that the phrase ascribed to Peter was in fact a later interpolation.[12]

I take another incident. The Sanhedrin had assembled to find Jesus guilty of a charge of blasphemy; yet they could not get witnesses. If Jesus had been proclaiming his sonship of God to the *multitudes*, as Christians would have us believe, surely the elders ought not to have felt any difficulty in getting the two requisite witnesses, particularly when the Scribes and Pharisees were always present in the crowds which used to gather around Jesus. It is, however, alleged that Jesus asserted before the

1 Ps., LXXXII: 6.
2 Exod., XXII: 28.
3 Matt., VIII: 27; XIII: 56; Mark, II: 7; VI: 2; John, XI: 37.
4 John, VIII: 40.
5 Matt., XIII: 57; Mark, VI: 4; Luke, IV: 24; John, IV: 44.
6 Matt., XVI: 14; Mark, VIII: 28; Luke, IX: 19.
7 John, III: 2.
8 Luke, XXIV: 19.
9 Matt., XVI: 16.
10 Mark, VIII: 31; Luke, IX: 22.
11 Luke, IX: 21. *cf.* Mark, VIII: 30.
12 Revised Version, p. 1177. *cf.* John, VI: 69.

Sanhedrin that he was the Son of God. Luke narrates that the Jews questioned Jesus :

> Art thou then the son of God? And he said unto them, *Ye say that I am*.[1]

Apart from the fact that in the very preceding verse he had told the elders that he was *Son of Man*, he wished to clear the position and meant to convey : *Ye* say that I am, *but I do not*. This was a peculiar but usual method of giving the negative answer. Matthew gives the answer as : "Thou hast said."[2] Peake commenting on this verse says :

> We should perhaps take the ambiguous reply, "Thou hast said," as a refusal.[3]

The Jews, however, were bent on misconstruing his reply and did take it as an admission, but not so Pilate. The charge of the Jews which would have brought the case within the jurisdiction of Pilate, was that Jesus had claimed to be king of the Jews. Therefore, Pilate questioned him :

> Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, *Thou sayest it*?[4]

Pilate took the answer, as should have been done by the Jews, to be a denial of the charge :

> And said Pilate to the chief priest and to the people, I find no fault in *this man*.[5]

It is obvious, therefore, that Jesus had equally denied the charge of having ever claimed to be *Son of God* in the narrow sense, and it is merely a puerile and childish prank of Christians to construe these verses as supporting the godhead of Jesus.

As I have said. two verses, and no more, one in Mark and the other in the *Logia*, put words into the mouth of Jesus which, if read superficially, show that he did designate himself as the Son of God. It should not be forgotten that Jesus spoke Aramaic and not Greek; and when for instance he said *Abba*, Mark correctly translated it as *Father*,[6] but Matthew converted it into *O my father*,[7] while Luke and John improved it as *My father*,[8] and the editors of the Revised Version have to mention time and again that *the* should be read in place of *my*. There is another subtle way in which the redactors tried to impress the physical sonship of Jesus. When any one *e.g.*, the Centurion, said of Jesus that he was *a* son of God, the redactors changed it into *the* son of

1 Luke, XXII : 70.
2 Matt., XXVI : 64.
3 Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 722.
4 Luke, XXIII : 3.
5 Luke, XXIII : 4.
6 Mark, XIV : 36.
7 Matt., XXVI : 39.
8 See Revised Version, p. 1190 ; John, XIV : 28.

God.[1] Such changes almost escape detection. They also *prima facie* established the alleged fact, carried conviction and left an everlastingly wrong impression. If, however, we read the Gospels with care the distinction which is sought to be made disappears from the source. Thus we read:

And I appoint unto you the kingdom, as *my* father hath appointed it unto me.[2]

This verse with *the* substituted for *my* can be subscribed to by the followers of any other religion. Thus if we read the two verses with these changes in mind, it will become evident that even they do not support the sonship of Jesus. The first passage reads:

But that day and that hour (*i.e.*, the Day of Judgment) knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the son*, but the father.[3]

The second verse is:

All things are delivered unto me *of the* Father: and no man knoweth *the Son*, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.[4]

The first verse embodies a confession of Jesus of his limited knowledge and avowed ignorance of the Last Day of Judgment. The words *neither the son* are omitted from the Authorised Version of Matthew's[5] though many ancient authorities contain them. According to Dummelow this omission was due to the fact that they were looked upon "as being a difficulty to faith"[6] For similar reasons both Luke and John omitted the entire verse This verse led the Arians to believe and teach that Jesus was ignorant of the Divine Will and Athanasius had to explain to them that "ignorance is part of human nature of Jesus." But if we read this verse with the second verse and with the verse preceding it, the meaning becomes abundantly clear. This preceding verse reads:

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.[7]

Thus while Jesus in one place confesses ignorance of the Divine Will, he in another place thanks God for His revelation to him and goes on to explain that no one else knoweth of His Will, His revelation, until he discloses it to him. There is nothing extraordinary in such an assertion. The Divine revelation to a Prophet of God is unknown to men till the Prophet himself discloses it.

1 Matt., XXVII : 54. See revised version, 1096.
2 Luke, XXII : 29.
3 Mark, XIII : 32.
4 Matt., XI : 27; *cf.* Luke, X : 22.
5 Matt., XXIV : 36.
6 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 731.
7 Matt., XI : 25.

But even this explanation does not remove the difficulty of belief in the divinity of Jesus. His ignorance of things around him is incomprehensible if he was Divine and therefore Omniscient. As the "Very God of the Very God" he should have known that prescience shown by him would be a proof of his Divinity, and yet he deliberately, and I think intentionally, time and again confessed his lack of knowledge of the unseen. I give but a few instances which exhibit this ignorance of Jesus.

When a certain woman "which had an issue of blood twelve years" came behind Jesus and touched the border of his garment, Jesus did not know and had to ask: "Who touched my clothes?"[1]

Jesus did not know whether anything could be found on a fig tree except leaves.[2]

Jesus said that of his own he could do nothing and confessed:

> I can of my own self do nothing.[3]

And went on to say:

> If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.[4]

But I must revert to the two verses under discussion. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that they, if the Christian interpretation be correct, are fundamentally inconsistent with each other. The whole periscope of which these passages form a part is called *The Prayer of Thanksgiving.* But the very clearly marked rhythm of the whole of this prayer gives it the appearance of a piece of liturgy of an Eastern religion, *e.g.*, Ea said to Marduk: "My son, what I know, thou knowest." Further the fundamental ideas and the characteristic expressions have every appearance of having come from the *Wisdom of Jesus*, the son of Sirach, and verses of *Sirach* can be easily picked out which compare with those of this prayer.[5]

It is not difficult to cite similar passages from the Old Testament[6] which may equally have served as the source of these verses and from which the redactors may have copied. If such be the case, the two verses would have to be given the same significance as that obtaining in the Old Testament, and which has already been explained by me.

But to find the real explanation of the introduction of the Son-God theory into the simple faith of Jesus we shall have to look

1 Mark, V: 25-30.
2 Matt., XXI: 18-19.
3 John, V: 30; see also John, VIII: 28; Matt., XX: 20-23.
4 John, V: 31.
5 The beginning of the prayer in Matthew is indicated by *Sir* II: 1; Matt., XI: 28-a and *Sir* II: 23; Matt., XI: 28-b and *Sir* XXIV: 2; Matt., XI: 29-a and *Sir* VI: 24; Matt., XI: 29-b and *Sir* VI: 28; Matt., XI: 30 and *Sir* VI: 29.
6 Isa., LV: 1—3; Zech., IX: 9; Jer., VI: 16, etc.

to the Greek atmosphere in which Paul created Christianity. It was there that the word *Christ* became a proper name of Jesus. They spoke of *Jesus Christ* as of *Julius Cæsar*. I am not really concerned here with the problem of the Christological development. I merely wish to point out that the Messiah to Jews was to be a *servant* (*Ebad*) of God and not the son of God in the physical sense: but on Greek soil the Christological belief found an environment very different from that of Palestine. There the idea of procreation of a human being by gods was current and the relationship between Jesus and God could shock no one. On the contrary, the term *Son of God* was more likely to arouse sympathy in that quarter than the Jewish name of Messiah. Hence it was among the Greeks that the expression arose.

In the second place, it was assisted by a phrase which Jesus used and which was used by those around him to express his intimate relations with God, namely, and without any doubt, *Ebad Jehovah*, the servant of God. This expression was used in the Septuagint to designate those who were especially devoted to fulfilling the Will of Jehovah.[1] In this sense it was often applied to Israel as a whole.[2] It was applied to Moses,[3] David[4] and other prophets.[5]

Such an expression, so consecrated by the Scriptures as the designation of a prophet of God, could hardly, it seems, have failed to be applied to Jesus. But we find that in the Gospels the phrase was applied to him *once* only,[6] and that for a reason. The redactors could not avoid this description because they were quoting a passage from the Old Testament[7] and showing its fulfilment in Jesus.[8] Again, I suppose by an oversight Jesus is spoken of as a *servant* of God in three places in the Acts,[9] and once by Paul.[10]

The word *ebad* was unfortunately translated into the Greek word *pais* meaning a *servant* and also a *child*. And from *child* to *son* was an easy transition for the Greeks. But it soon took the Christological idea expressed in the Epistles of Paul. It found its Pauline and Johannine justifications in the doctrine of Divine pre-existence and of the incarnation of Jesus The legend of the virgin birth was a "Consequential Relief," and the reassuring alterations in, and additions to, the texts provided its confirmation. I quote but one instance. In the beginning, according to Luke when Jesus was baptized, the Lord had said : *This day have*

1 Ps., LXIX : 17 A.V. : *Wisd.*, II : 13.
2 Isa., XLI : 8; XLII : 19; XLIV : 1, etc.
3 Neh., I : 7.
4 Ps., XVIII : 1 Intro.
5 Gen., IX : 25 ; 2 Sam. II : 12, etc.
6 Matt., XII : 18.
7 Isa., XLII : 1.
8 Matt., XII : 17.
9 Acts, III : 13 (R.V. 1203) ; IV : 27 (R.V. 1204) ; IV : 30. (R.V. 1204).
10 Phili., II : 7.

I begotten thee,[1] but it soon became changed into: *Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleas d.*[2] Among the Gentiles Jesus became the son of God from the day of his Baptism, but in the Rabbinical traditions Jesus continued to be a man among men, a man of humble status.[3]

In view of this explanation, the two verses do not present any further difficulty. If the word *servant* is substituted for *son*, the passages do not establish any relation of sonship with God The compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, while commenting on these two verses, and taking the two passages together, say:

> We must infer that Jesus had indeed communion with God *but nothing beyond it*; but this connection was under such limitations that the attribute of Goodness as well as absolute knowledge belonged to God, *and hence the boundary line between the Divine and human was strictly preserved.*[4]

A prophecy in Isaiah[5] was supposed to have led to the belief that Jesus, as the Messiah, would be born of a virgin by means of Divine agency. I will explain later how the word *virgin* was introduced into this verse.[6] But this led to a philosophical mythus resulting in a faith unknown to Jesus. The theory of the incarnation of God was merely a departure from this faith to a dogmatic assertion. What had to be was actually made to have been, and the redactors of the Gospels introduced it accordingly.[7] The historical truth that Jesus was the offspring of an ordinary marriage, which would have maintained the dignity of Jesus as a prophet of God, was perverted into a supernatural and mythical conception of Jesus. Paulus, from a true perception of the identical character of the two son-Gods, compares Jesus with the son of Apollo and the virgin mother Perictiones. To this mythus must be added the Jewish idea that the Holy Spirit sometimes descended upon its choicest *sons of God*. The title "son of God," coupled with the factors already mentioned, led to a more precise interpretation and later to a literal acceptance. The prophecy of Isaiah was matured by the phrase:

> Thou art my son; this day I have begotten thee[8]

Thus a union with God became necessary and the words *son of Virgin* and *son of God* competed with each other; and with the Pagan deities in the background, the Divine agency became substituted for a human participation; and Jesus became another son of God through a Virgin. This legend, which was thus substituted for a humble reality, was old, and the reason for the substitution was also very old.

1 Western Text and Codex D.
2 Luke, III: 22.
3 Langrange, *Le Messianisme Chez les Juifs*, p. 223.
4 *Ency. Biblica*, Art: *Son of God* (Italics are mine).
5 Isa., VII: 14.
6 Page 112 *infra*.
7 De Wette, *Bible Dogma*, S. 281.
8 Ps., II: 7.

CHAPTER VI

VIRGIN BIRTH

The Apocryphal and the Canonical Gospels give different versions of the conception and birth of Jesus. They describe the various stages from a simple and natural occurrence to a minute and miraculously embellished story in which the events are traced back to the very earliest date. Mark and John content themselves with the mention of Mary as the mother and of Joseph as the father of Jesus.[1] Matthew and Luke, however, give details of the circumstances attending the conception and birth of Jesus, as the Messiah, and are at pains to fulfil, as far as possible, all the prophecies of the Old Testament in the person of Jesus. Matthew is out to meet all the objections as may, or could, have been raised against the virgin birth theory, at the time this Gospel was written or revised.[2] Both of them, however, presuppose Mary to be the *espoused* wife of Joseph. The Apocryphal Gospel *the Gospel according to the Hebrews*, *the Gospel of the Ebionites*, and some others, with most of which the early Christian Fathers agreed, narrate the origin of Jesus as the result of a lawful marriage between Joseph and Mary.

Apart from the mere physical considerations, the Gospels rely on Divine Omnipotence with which, of course, nothing is impossible. But by virtue of His Unity and Wisdom, the Almighty God never exerts His Divine Omnipotence without adequate motive. Further, nothing less than an object worthy of God and at the same time unattainable except by a deviation from His ordinary laws of nature, which He himself has established, could constitute a sufficient cause for the suspension by God of His laws.

Corinthus, one of the very early Christians, arguing against the virgin birth, urged that

> it is impossible, because by the concurrence of two sexes is a new human being generated, and that the contrary would be most remarkable departure from all natural laws.[3]

Forced with the strength of his reasoning the Christian apologists, opposing Corinthus, did not hesitate to reduce Jesus to a *worm*, for they alleged that the birth of Jesus was in a manner like that of a worm and asserted that the following passages applied to Jesus:

> I am a worm, not a man.[4]
>
> The *son of man*, which is a worm.[5]

1 Mark, VI: 3; John, I: 45; VI: 42.

2 Matt., I: 18-25.

3 *Hom. Lucan*, XIII.

4 Ps., XXII: 6-8.

5 Job. XXV: 6.

The Christian apologists of a period a little later, however, had to take another line of argument. They maintained that Jesus had come for the redemption of mankind and, therefore, had to be severed from all original sin from his birth.[1] But to this is a simple answer : the exclusion of the paternal participation is wholly insufficient because the inheritance of original sin was from Eve and, therefore, the maternal participation should have been avoided as was done in the case of Melchisedec, whom Paul described as having been born without father and without mother.[2] It is then argued that the participation of the Holy Ghost was meant to purify the maternal participation. But this could have been done without violation of natural laws. In any case, nowhere is such a conception ascribed to Mary. The expression *the Holy Ghost* is specially characteristic of the New Testament and occurs in it eighty-one times. The Jews did not regard the Spirit as personal and, therefore, Mary must have understood the words : *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* as identical with *the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* But not so with the evangelists to whom, about a century afterwards, the term "Holy Ghost" had become practically a proper name.

Leaving these special pleadings of Christian apologists and their refutations aside, for they really do not lead us anywhere, I will now take up the evangelic records. The virgin birth, though definitely asserted in Matthew[3] and Luke,[4] finds no echo in any other part of the New Testament. Mark is totally silent. If such a remarkable event had in fact happened, and he had believed in it, would he have remained silent? The answer is obvious; but against this, a reference is made to the description of Jesus in Mark as "son of God,"[5] and it has been argued that Mark would not have styled Jesus as such if he did not believe in the virgin birth. I admit the force of this argument and one might have conceded the virgin birth theory on this argument alone if there had been any basis for attributing the alleged words to Mark. These very words were also used by Luke.[6] But both the verses are the result of later interpolations. In Mark the words were merely added.[7] The Sinaitic Syriac, which is of great authority, and the early patristic traditions represented by Irenæus and Origen, followed by Basil and Jerome, omit the words. In Luke the phrase, *the Son of God*, was substituted for the word *Holy*.[8] These facts demolish the argument; but, in any case, the words, *Son of God*, are to be interpreted in a metaphorical sense and not in a physical sense. The phrase *son of Mary*[9] can be explained by the fact that

1 Olshausen, *Bibl. Comm.*, S. 49.
2 Heb., VII : 1-3.
3 Matt., I : 18-25.
4 Luke, I : 5-80.
5 Mark, I : 1.
6 Luke, I : 35.
7 See Marginal note in the Revised Version, p : 1098
8 See Revised Version p. 1126.
9 Mark, VI : 3.

Joseph was dead when these words were written, for he had died during the ministry of Jesus. I would, by way of analogy, mention that the late King Edward VII is known as the son of the late Queen Victoria. No one would dream of suggesting any supernatural birth because of this fact. This kind of argument clearly establishes that Christian apologists are on their hind legs to prove the virgin birth theory. Besides, Jesus is really spoken of as the son of Joseph.[1]

Mark, I repeat, ought to have known of this virgin birth, and since he does not mention it, it stands to reason that either he was ignorant of it or he did not accept it. There are still some traces which show that in the *Urmarcus* it was at the time of baptism of Jesus, and not at the moment of his conception, that the Holy Spirit entered his humanity. Mark, therefore, could not have believed in the virgin birth of Jesus.

John is equally silent, and his silence is all the more significant since it was he, as is supposed, to whom Jesus, while on the cross, entrusted the care of Mary.[2] He, therefore, would have been all the more likely person to know all the facts about the occurrence. It is argued that John believed that Jesus was the incarnation of God, of the *Logos*, and was co-eternal with God. Christian apologists refer to :

> Which were born out of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.[3]

And argue that John was not depending on any earthly father. To this I reply : he was equally not depending on any earthly mother. To cite this passage in favour of the virgin birth theory is grossly to misconstrue it. It refers in fact to *the sons of God* mentioned in the preceding verse. In any case, the incarnation of the *Logos* in Jesus does not imply that the man Jesus was exempt from the laws of human generation, for it was at his baptism that, according to John also, the *Logos* descended into him. John merely elevates the idea of Mark and preserves it in its external form. Accordingly, he never misses an opportunity of stating that Jesus is the son of Joseph. He records of one of Jesus' disciples saying :

> Philip findeth Nathaneal and saith unto him : we have found him of whom Moses in the Law and prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, *the son of Joseph*.[4]

And again :

> And they said, Is not this Jesus, *the son of Joseph*, whose *father* and mother we know. . . . ?[5]

John could never have recorded these incidents if they had, to his mind, conflicted with his theory.

1 John, I: 45; VI: 42.
2 John, XIX: 27.
3 John, I: 13.
4 John, I: 45.
5 John, VI: 42.

Turning to the Apostles, we do not find the slightest reference to virgin birth in any of their Epistles. Paul speaks of the descent of Jesus according to the flesh[1] and he says:

> But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, *born of a woman, born under the law.*[2]

Now if this verse is read without forcing its meaning it will appear to indicate the normal birth of a Jewish child. Paul makes two definite statements. He says that Jesus was *born of a woman*. He does not say Jesus was born of a virgin; because he knew of Jesus' human generation, and asserted

> Jesus Christ, our Lord, was *born* of the seed of David, according to the flesh.[3]

The expression *born of a woman* is not peculiar to Paul. In the biblical sense, it has a significance of its own; and Paul must be held to have used the phrase in that sense only. In the Old Testament, when anyone's normal human birth had to be described, he was referred to as having been *born of a woman*. Jesus used this phrase in this very sense regarding John the Baptist, and the rest of the people of his time, when he said:

> Verily I say unto you, among them that are *born of women*, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.[4]

In the Old Testament we read:

> Man, that is *born of a woman*, is of a few days and full of trouble.[5]

When Paul, therefore, described Jesus as *born of a woman* he meant nothing more than that Jesus was born in accordance with human nature with all its conditions.

A passage in Isaiah[6] has been referred to to indicate that a virgin was meant by Paul. It is merely a play upon the Greek word *Bethulah* (virgin), which does not appear in the Hebrew text, and thus a wrong translation of an Hebrew word *Haalmah* (woman) has led to confusion where none existed.[7] Dummelow admits that "the Hebrew word is not the distinctive one for virginity."[8]

The Rev. Prof. Donaldson in his discussion of the meaning of the Hebrew word *Haalmah* says:

> Every one who is acquainted with the Hebrew word will be obliged to admit that the designation in question cannot mean anything more than a young or *newly married woman.*[9]

1 Rom., I: 3.
2 Gal., IV: 4. I have used the word *born* instead of *made*, as it is so given in the Revised Version, p. 1288.
3 Rom., 1-3, I have used the word *born* instead of *made*. See R.V., p. 1211.
4 Matt., XI: 11; Luke, VII: 28.
5 Job., XIV: 1; see also 4 Esdras, VI · 6; VII: 46; VIII: 35, etc.
6 Isa., VII: 14.
7 Revised Version, p. 760.
8 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 148.
9 Donaldson, *The Christian Orthodoxy*, 476.

It may also be mentioned that the same word, *Haalmah*, was used for Rebekeh and she was not a virgin at that time.[1]

But Paul makes the matter absolutely clear, for he asserts that Jesus was *born under the law*. What was this Law? I will let Jesus give the answer:

> But from the beginning of the creation God made them males and females, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh. So then they are no more twain, but one flesh.[2]

By this saying of Jesus not only is *the law* explained whereby the generation of human beings is made clear, but the other phrase which Paul used about Jesus being "born of the seed of David according to *the flesh*" becomes abundantly clear if we read it with the assertion that the Messiah had to be "the fruit of the loins of David."[3]

Finally, in the prologue of the Epistle to the Romans it is clearly stated that:

> Jesus . . . . which was born of the seed of David *according to the flesh*, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the *spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.*[4]

The words of Paul, therefore, leave no room for any doubt at all, for no one can identify the antithesis of flesh and spirit with maternal human participation in the conception of Jesus Jesus, in the words of Paul born *according to the flesh* in the natural manner, became the son of God *according to the spirit* at his resurrection and not at his birth. In other words, according to Paul, though Jesus was a *man in flesh*, yet he was the *son of God* in *spirit* only. The latter statement, of course, is a mere Christological assertion, and is also found in the Acts, in which the Messianic exultation of Jesus still dates from the resurrection.

"Neither Paul nor Mark," say the compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "betray any knowledge of the tradition (of virgin birth). It was unknown to the Apostles, and did not appear to have formed part of the Apostolic preachings."[5] Had such an event taken place, Paul would certainly have known of it and would have been the first to broadcast it to the world.

The other Apostles were also ignorant of the virgin birth and are equally silent. James the Just, brother of Jesus, was the head of the Church at Jerusalem. He belonged to the Ebionite sect. He with them believed that:

> Jesus is the Messiah, yet *a mere man*, born by natural generation to

1 Gen., XXIV: 43.
2 Mark, X: 6-8; *cf.* Gen., I: 27; II: 24; V: 2; 1 Cor., VI: 16: Eph., V: 31
3 Acts, II: 30; *cf.* Ps., CXXXII: 11.
4 Rom., I: 3-4.
5 *Ency. Brit.*, 14th Edn., Vol. 13, 20. (Words in brackets are mine.)

Joseph and Mary.[1]

In the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is narrated that Mary had been married to Joseph and had given birth to Jesus in a natural manner.[2] Jerome has preserved a verse from this Gospel which says :

> The mother and father of Jesus were present at his baptism[3]

Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson recovered an old Syriac manuscript of the Gospel in a monastery on Mount Sinai. In this was found an explicit statement :

> Jesus' father was Joseph and his mother Mary.[4]

The History of Joseph the carpenter tells us that Jesus at the death of Joseph, uttered the following lamentations :

> Not a single limb of it shall be broken, nor shall any hair of thy head be changed. Nothing of thy body shall perish, *O ! my, father*, Joseph, but it will remain entire and uncorrupted even until the banquet of the Thousand Years.[5]

The object of writing this History is revealed in the book in the words of the Apostles' address to Jesus :

> Thou hast ordered us to go into all the world and to preach thy holy Gospel, and thou hast said : "Relate to them the death of my father, Joseph, and celebrate to him with annual solemnity a festival and a sacred Day."[6]

Thus we get the origin of the festival of St. Joseph's Day.

In one of the books of the Samaritan Chronicles there occurs the following passage :

> In the time of Jehonathan, there was . . . . Jesus, the son of Mari, son of Joseph, the Carpenter..... ..at Jerusalem, in the reign of Tiberius. . . .[7]

Jesus was a Jew, and to the Jews amongst whom he lived and preached, he was *under the Law*. The Jews of his time, and of Galilee in particular, who knew him and his parents, did not believe in his Divine Mission or his virgin birth. They had two alternatives before them. They could either believe him to be a legitimate offspring of Joseph and Mary or treat him, I shudder to use the word but for special reasons have no option, as a *bastard*.

Jesus, we are told, entered the synagogues and preached there.[8] Had the Jews looked upon Jesus as a bastard, they

1 Hastings, *History of the Apostolic Church*, 318 32. See also Mosheim *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1, 214.
2 Gospel of Heb., II : 3.
3 *Ibid.*, III : 2.
4 Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospel*, 2.
5 Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, 434.
6 *Ibid.*
7 *Journale Asiatique*, 1869 ; II : 439.
8 Matt., IV : 23 ; IX : 35 ; XII : 9 ; XXI : 12 ; Mark, I : 21, 39 ; VI : 2 ; Luke, IV : 33, 44 ; John, VI : 59, etc.

would not have allowed him to attend, much less preach in, the synagogues for it was ordained that:

> A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of *the Lord*.1

In face of this clear injunction, and what we are told of Jesus' behaviour in the Temple at Jerusalem, can anyone seriously urge that the Jews of his time did not look upon him as a legitimate offspring of Israel?

In the writing of an ancient Rabbi, who wrote just when virgin birth was first attributed to Jesus, we read:

> Jesus was as legitimate as any other Jewish child in Galilee. His father was an artisan, a carpenter. The son learned the trade of his father and made goads and yokes. 2

A happy chance has preserved the following Talmudic expression which from the Jewish point of view lends support to the Rabbinical writings referred to above:

> Jesus was a carpenter, a son of a carpenter.3

After taking into consideration the contemporary writings and other Rabbinical literature the compilers of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* express themselves in the following terms:

> The Jews, who are represented as inimical to Jesus in the Canonical Gospels, took him to be legitimate and born in the ordinary natural way.4

Whiston in his *Dissertation I* to the works of Josephus remarks:

> All the believing Jews and all the rest of the Nazarene Jews esteemed Jesus with one consent, as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.5

Hastings also says that:

> It is quite clear that Jesus was popularly looked upon by his contemporaries as Joseph's son by natural generation.6

I have already mentioned that Jesus' parents had named him *Joshua* which means *son of a father*. It has been well said that there lay a deep significance in this name also. It was a warning, nay a counterblast, to such as should ascribe virgin birth to Jesus.

I have so far refrained from discussing the versions of Matthew and Luke, and before I do so I must refer to another matter. So long as the early Christians did not assert the virgin birth of Jesus, none of his contemporaries challenged his legi-

1 Deut., XXIII: 2.
2 *Ab Zar*, 3 b.
3 *J. Yeban*, III: 2.
4 *Jewish Ency.*, Vol. VII, 170.
5 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 276.
6 Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ* and the *Gospels*, 808.

timacy. But the moment Jesus was raised to the pedestal of godhead, the imaginations of the hagiographers had full scope. In the second century they attributed supernatural birth to Jesus. The Pagans retorted with the charge of illegitimacy. The Christian legendary cult has to thank itself for this calumny against Jesus and Mary. Josephus had provided the Pagans with a parallel:[1] for he records that Mundus, a Roman knight, won Paulina, the chaste wife of a Roman noble, to his wishes by causing her to be invited by a priest of Isis into the temple of the goddess, under a pretext that the god Anubias desired to embrace her. In the innocence of faith Paulina resigned herself and would perhaps have afterwards believed that she gave birth to the son of this god had not the intriguer, with bitter scorn, soon after disclosed to her the true state of affairs.

The Pagans substituted Mary for Paulina and Joseph Pandera, a soldier, for the Roman knight mentioned by Josephus.

This calumny was taken up by the Jews of the second century, and found a place in the Talmud. Jesus was then styled as *ben* Pandera. It is this calumny of which Celsus accuses the Jews and which is referred to by Origen[2] but of which the Jews of the time of Jesus were ignorant and innocent.

Now let me look into the Gospels generally and find the position of Jesus and his mother. It is very peculiar that there is no retrospective reference to the virgin birth of Jesus in the New Testament. Not one of the incidents contained in the New Testament allude even indirectly to this outstanding miracle.

Let us first listen to Jesus himself. According to the Gospels, he never made any reference, nor appealed, to the manner of his birth in support of his claim. On the other hand, however, we find expressions used by him which exclude the idea of a virgin birth. In Matthew he declared that he cast out devils by "the spirit of God."[3] This assertion rested on the basis that the Spirit of God filled his body, but not upon the idea that it was by the Divine Spirit that he had been begotten. This saying of Jesus clearly proves that he was absolutely ignorant about his supernatural birth, and he never realized that God had in any manner connected his mission on earth with the peculiar manner of his birth. Surely such a saying of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, would have been an improbability if Jesus had possessed the consciousness that his mother had been deemed by God to be worthy of a position so exalted, so singular, as the hagiographers have ascribed to her. I will

1 Josephus, *Antiq.*, XVIII : 3-4.
2 Orig., *C : Celsus*, I : 32.
3 Matt., XII : 28.

presently show that he actually thought otherwise. In any case it can hardly be suggested that his parents could have concealed the happy event. It is recorded that when Joseph and Mary took the child Jesus to the Temple for purification, Simon took the child and prayed that, as he had then seen Christ, he might be permitted to die.

> And his father Joseph and his mother marvelled at the things spoken of him.[1]

And we are further told that they took him to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem when he was twelve years of age. After a day's journey on their return, they found Jesus missing, and had to go back to Jerusalem in search of him. They found him after a search of three days, sitting in the Temple, in the midst of the Scribes, both hearing them and asking them questions. The narrative goes on :

> And when they saw him *they were amazed*, and his mother said unto him : Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? *Behold thy father and I* have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them : How is it that ye sought me? *Wist ye* not that I must be about my Father's business? *And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*[2]

Naturally, Joseph and Mary, knowing that Jesus was their offspring in the natural physical sense, failed to understand a child of twelve speaking of someone else as his father. This incident of all strikes at the very root of the virgin birth theory, and establishes beyond the least shade or shadow of doubt that at least his parents had no knowledge of it. Of course, they could not have even dreamt of it, as they knew otherwise. Their lack of understanding Jesus thus becomes intelligible; while, on the other hand, it is rendered absolutely incomprehensible if supernatural birth, to the knowledge of his parents, is ascribed to Jesus. And would they not talk of this miraculous event between themselves and to others? In anticipation of such an objection the redactor gives us an answer, impossible to believe. He says :

> But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.[3]

Anyhow, we are not told that Joseph also behaved in this foolish manner.

The terms in which Jesus referred to his mother are also incompatible with the virgin birth theory. I will narrate but two incidents. Jesus had gone with his disciples, we are told, to a marriage party and had asked for wine. Mary, who was also present, informed him that there was none in the house. He at once turned on her, and

> Jesus saith unto her, Woman : what have I to do with thee?[4]

On another occasion, it is recorded that the Jews, alluding

1 Luke, II : 33.
2 Luke, II : 48-50.
3 Luke, II : 51.
4 John, II : 4.

to the Holy Ghost having descended on Jesus at his baptism, alleged that Jesus was possessed of an unclean spirit. Jesus was discussing the question thus raised, when :

> There came then his brethren and his mother and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them saying, Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round about on them, which sat about him, and said: Behold, my mother and brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.[1]

These harsh sayings of Jesus conclusively prove that Jesus was dissociating himself from his mother, brothers and sisters because they, according to the Gospels, would not believe in him. This fact is further made clear by John :

> Neither did his brethren believe in him.[2]

The context makes it quite clear that John was speaking of the blood-brothers of Jesus. It is not surprising, if the virgin birth theory did not exist at the time, that they did not believe in him We know that James the Just did not accept him till after the crucifixion. The last passage stands connected with a circumstance which Matthew tries to disguise and Luke omits altogether and which is preserved only by Mark. He narrates :

> And when his *kinsmen* heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him; for they said *he is mad*.[3]

Before proceeding further I must point out the manner in which, for obvious reasons, an effort has been made to dilute the force of this incident. The word *kinsmen* has been replaced by the word *friends* and the words *He is beside himself* have been substituted for *He is mad*.

Who these *kinsmen*, or *friends*, were we learn from Matthew[4] and Mark :[5] they were his mother and brethren. They had set out from Nazareth and arrived at a time when he was having a controversy with the Scribes. Even if we regard it as possible that Mary chose to keep her secret, she, knowing of his supernatural origin, would never have thought of him as *mad* or *beside himself*. Jesus' saying on another occasion is also germane to the present subject. Jesus was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day and many were astonished and said :

> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Jose, and of Juda and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And *they were offended at him*. But Jesus said unto them : A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among *his own kin, and in his own house*.[6]

The words *among his own kin* have been singularly omitted

1 Mark, III : 31-35 ; *cf.* Matt., XII : 48—50.
2 John, VII : 5.
3 Mark, III : 21.
4 Matt., XII : 46.
5 Mark, III : 31.
6 Mark, VI : 3-4.

by Matthew[1] and Luke.[2] Why? The answer is too obvious to be mentioned. Jesus never boasted of his Divine origin, but rather claimed inspiration from God.[3] The view that Jesus first received the Holy Spirit at the time of his baptism[4] and that up to that time Jesus had not yet been glorified[5] could never have arisen if the theory of virgin birth had been in existence from the first. He himself claimed to be like unto Moses, and asserted that he was a son of Abraham.[6] He was styled as a mere *man*,[7] and he spoke of himself as such.[8] He was spoken of by others as the *son of Man*, and he also described himself as such—thirty times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, twenty-four times in Luke and twelve times in John. He is described as such in the Acts and the Revelation. Never did he speak of himself as the son of God except in two passages, which I have already discussed.

As to the meaning or significance of the phrase, the *Son of Man*, we must turn again to the Old Testament. In the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel we find that the term *Son of Man*, *Ben Adam*, is the standing phrase by which the Prophet describes himself.[9] This was no doubt in Hebrew, but Aramaic was only one of its dialects. Again every descendant of Adam is spoken of as *son of man*.[10] It is impossible to imagine that the Jews, who were extremely devoted to the Old Testament, would have forgotten so frequent a use of this phrase Whatever degradation the phrase may have suffered in common speech, the Biblical use must at any time have been capable of being revived as a mode of address of *a man*. Rev. William Sanday says that "to the Jews and to Jesus, who was a Jew, this phrase as a whole meant no more than a simple man."[11]

I have discussed this phrase to show that Jesus would not have referred to himself as *son of Man* if he did not mean to convey that he was just a man himself, a man with all the implications of a human being, including male participation in his conception.

I will now go into further details to show how the New Testament teems with references against the virgin birth theory. Mary is described as the *espoused* wife of Joseph;[12] and again by the simple description of *wife*.[13] Joseph is referred to

1 Matt., XIII : 57.
2 Luke., IV : 24.
3 John., VII : 28.
4 Matt., III : 15-16 ; Mark., I : 10-11.
5 John, VII : 39.
6 Luke, XIX : 9.
7 Matt., VIII : 27 ; Mark, II : 7, VI : 2 ; John, I : 30, VII : 27-28, 46 ; Acts, VI : 37, II : 22.
8 Mark, XIII : 34 ; John, III : 13, VIII : 40.
9 Eze., II : 1, 3 ; III : 1, 3, 4, etc.
10 Job., XXV : 6 ; Ps., CXLIV : 3, CXLVI : 3; Isa., LI : 12, LVI : 2.
11 Sanday : *The Life of Christ*, 213.
12 Matt., I : 18 ; Luke, I : 27, II : 25.
13 Matt., I : 20 24.

as the husband of Mary.[1] Not only does Mary herself describe Joseph as the father of Jesus,[2] but Joseph is referred to as the father of Jesus in many places[3] and, further, both Mary and Joseph are mentioned as the parents of Jesus,[4] a description which could not have been used in any other sense but to convey the natural conception of Jesus. The efforts of the redactors to disguise the paternity of Jesus have no limit. To mention a few: In Matthew the words "*the carpenter's son*" were substituted for Joseph.[5] In Luke the words *His father* preceding *Joseph* were omitted[6] and in another place the words *Joseph and Mary* were omitted and the words *his parents* were substituted,[7] while the words *his parents* appearing before *Joseph and Mary* were also omitted.[8] The oldest six codices have, in Vs. 41 of Ch. II, the words *Joseph et Maria* after *his parents*, and these also were omitted.[9]

It is for Christian apologists to explain why these changes were made.

The fact that Jesus was acknowledged as the son of Joseph, in the physical sense, cannot be denied. This fact was not infrequently alluded to contemptuously and by way of reproach in his presence. I am, of course, referring to descriptions of Jesus as the *son of a carpenter*.[10] Not once did Jesus repudiate it or assert his immaculate conception. I have already quoted two passages from John [11] in which reference was made to Joseph as the father of Jesus. It is obvious that these statements were made, in the presence of Jesus, manifestly in the real sense of paternity and nowhere is this represented to be erroneous. The entire narratives exhibited the Apostles as having a right belief on the point.

Throughout the New Testament the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah is based on his descent from David.[12] This descent can only be attributed to Jesus if he was born according to natural law, for he is styled to be *of the seed of David* and had to be the fruit of the loins of David according to the flesh.[13] And we find that Luke, appreciating the importance of this fact, says that Joseph was "of the house and lineage of David."[14] Dummelow

1 Matt., I : 16, 19.
2 Luke, II : 48.
3 Luke, II : 33, 48, IV : 22 : John, I : 45, VI : 42.
4 Luke, II : 27, 41, 43.
5 See R. V., p. 1074.
6 Luke II : 33, R. V., p. 1128.
7 Luke, II : 27.
8 Luke, II : 43.
9 Luke, II : 41.
10 Matt., XIII : 55; Luke, IV : 22; Mark, VI : 3.
11 John, I : 45, VI : 42.
12 Matt., XII : 23. XV : 22, XX : 30-31. XXI : 7, 15; Mark, X : 47 48, XI 10; Luke, I : 69, XVIII : 38-39; John, VII : 42; Acts, II : 29-30, XIII : 23; 2 Tim., II : 8, Heb., VII : 14, Rev., V : 5, XXII : 16.
13 Acts, II . 30.
14 Luke, II : 4.

also realizes this difficulty and says :

> The accuracy or inaccuracy of the genealogies does not affect the main point at issue, our Lord's descent, *through his legal father Joseph*, from David. Joseph's family certainly claimed descent of David.[1]

In these circumstances, the term *seed of David* requires some explanation. It has been furnished by Trypho, the Jew of Justin Martyr. He says :

> For we all await the Christ, who will be *a man* among men . . . the Messiah will be descended from the *seed of David*, he will not be born of a virgin, for it was God's promise to the ancient King that he who is to come, would issue from *his seed*. Are we to think that God was merely mocking him.[2]

Trypho, of course, was using the term in the literal sense and was adopting it as an argument against the virgin birth theory.

I will now deal with the versions as given in Matthew and Luke. The circumstances attending the announcement of the birth of Jesus as given in Matthew and Luke do not correspond. They differ in the following aspects :

MATTHEW.	LUKE
1. The Angel who appeared is not named.	1. Luke gives the Angel's name as Gabriel.
2. The Angel appears to Joseph.	2. The Angel appears to Mary.
3. The apparition is in a dream.	3. The apparition is while Mary is awake.
4. The announcement is after conception.	4. The announcement is before conception.
5. The apparition is meant to dispel the doubts of Joseph which he is alleged to have had against the character of Mary.	5. The announcement is by way of glorification.

In view of these divergencies in the two narratives two questions arise : first, did they record one and the same occurrence; and, secondly, if they were two separate occurrences, was the latter in amplification of the other.

The differences are so great and in so essential details—even the times are different—that they cannot relate to one and the same occurrence. Paulus has tried to blend the two.[2] According to him the angel first appeared to Mary and informed

1 Dummelow, *Comm. on the Holy Bible*, 622. (Italics are mine).

2 Paulus, *Comm. on Matt.*, 56.

her of her approaching pregnancy.[1] She then went to Elisabeth,[2] and on her return her condition was discovered by Joseph. He was then visited by the angel.[3] But the two accounts cannot be so easily reconciled, because the narrative of Matthew excludes that of Luke. The angel in Matthew speaks as if his was the first communication. The message previously received by Mary is not repeated to Joseph and he is not reproached for disbelieving it. The giving of the name of the forthcoming child, and the reason for his being so called,[4] smacks of an imaginative vision for which there was no justification and which was wholly superfluous because a similar communication had already been made to Mary.[5]

The expression used in Matthew[6] lends itself to an inference that Joseph discovered Mary's condition independently of any communication by her. Is it unreasonable or unnatural to expect that the first impulse of Mary, after the apparition, would have been to rush to her husband and to communicate to him the significance of the Divine message and thus avoid the humiliation of being made the subject of suspicion? Realizing this difficulty the Church apologists have put forward various theories. Firstly, that owing to her excited state of mind she forgot all about the communication, and subsequently she herself became ignorant of the true cause of her pregnancy; and she recalled it with tears in her eyes when questioned about it. This attempt to explain Mary's silence is incomprehensible, but Olshausen replies with his favourite remark that the measures of ordinary occurrences of the world should not be applied to the supernatural. I will let Hess answer him. He retorts that it is because of the supernatural that human mistakes should not have occurred, and he, therefore, rejects this explanation. The silence of Mary has also been attributed to her modest reluctance to cause a situation so liable to be misunderstood. This is ridiculous, because Mary was fully convinced of the Divine agency in the matter and had actually comprehended her mission[7] and could never have been tongue-tied by petty considerations of false shame. Another explanation put forward for Mary's silence is that Joseph was at a distance from his abode where Mary lived and did not return till after the pregnancy. But this story is based on the assumption that Joseph lived at Bethlehem-Judah, a considerable distance from Nazareth where Mary lived. This explanation is false; because Joseph lived at the village of Bethlehem in Galilee at a distance of seven miles from Nazareth. In any case, there is no justification for suggesting any such journey or that they lived apart, except to base a false argument on it. Again, it has been suggested that Mary did not open her heart to Joseph before the pregnancy because she wished first to consult her cousin

1 Luke, I: 28-32.
2 Luke, I: 39-41.
3 Matt., I: 20.
4 Matt., I: 21.
5 Luke, I: 31.
6 Matt., I: 18.
7 Luke, I: 38, 46-56.

Elisabeth as to the mode of making the disclosure to Joseph, and consequently she went to her and remained away for three months. But this explanation has equally no justification because, according to Luke, when Mary did meet her cousin, she did not mention Joseph at all to her.[1]

In view of these considerations one is forced to the conclusion that Matthew introduced the apparition to Joseph merely to meet the objection of the Ebionites as to why Joseph did not object if he was not the real father of Jesus, or act in a manner becoming any other man, if virgin birth was a fact. Matthew supplied the explanation, even if the scepticism and mistrust of Joseph of his wedded wife became incompatible with the character given to him by Matthew of being a *just man*.[2] But such considerations never weighed with Matthew, who was out to insert everything in his Gospel so long as it fulfilled a prophecy or had a parallel in the Old Testament. In this matter he merely borrowed the facts from the father of Moses, who was comforted under similar circumstances when he was anxious concerning the pregnancy of his wife, though for a different reason.

The two versions, therefore, can be neither parallel nor inter-connected. The angel could have appeared either to one or the other, and consequently only one of the two narratives can be considered. Joseph, according to the Gospels, never came in contact with any of the disciples of Jesus. He plays no part in the ministry of Jesus. How is it that his apparition is known at all and is recorded in the Gospel? On the other hand, it is natural that Mary, being the person chiefly concerned, ought to have been warned. For this reason also Luke's version must be preferred and that of Matthew rejected.

The version of Luke has peculiar features of its own; and the conception of Jesus through the Holy Ghost, grounded as it is on a mere assertion, has to be positively tested by other materials detailed in the New Testament, the Apocryphal Gospels and other contemporary literature.

The angel who appeared to Mary only informed her, in the first instance, that she would become pregnant, without specifying after what manner, and that she would bring forth a child and call him Jesus, who would be great and would be *the son of the Highest*.[3] The term *the son of the Highest* can be taken only in the sense of the Old Testament:[4] an ordinary king of Israel, a *man*. The term *Son of God*[5] was also used later by the angel. This is a spurious substitute for *shall be called Holy*.[6] It was not till she recalled the fact of her virginity that the angel defined the nature of the conception by the Holy Ghost. As a confirmatory sign Mary was referred to her cousin Elisabeth, whereupon Mary resigned herself to the will of God.

1 Luke, I: 46-56.
2 Matt., I: 19.
3 Luke, I: 32.
4 2 Sam., VII: 14; Ps., II: 7.
5 Luke, I: 35.
6 See Revised Version, p. 1125.

Mary, we are told, then immediately set out and went to her cousin, a visit which was attended by extraordinary occurrences: for when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb for joy; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost,[1] and in her exultation addressed Mary as the future mother of the Messiah,[2] to which Mary responded with a hymn of praise.[3]

It is this hymn of Mary which really shows the falsity of the statement, as it is so interlarded with the songs of praise spoken by the mother of Samuel in analogous circumstances.[4] These passages portray events not as they actually happened but as the redactor wished them to happen. Here, again, old history was repeating itself. "The mutual relations of Esau and Jacob had been prefigured by their struggles and positions in their mother's womb.[5] And the six months are introduced with the set purpose of taking advantage of circumstances which the redactor desired to contrive. The quickening has to take place, and the visit of the angel is withheld till after the longest possible period required for such an event.

From the narratives of Matthew[6] and Luke[7] it is clear that the conception of Jesus was to be by the Holy Ghost. But it is somewhat surprising to find that the very two Gospels which relate the miracle of the virgin birth, are the ones which claim the descent of Jesus as given in their genealogies. These genealogies, in spite of their defects and discrepancies, would never have been prepared if the relationship between Joseph and Jesus had not existed and been admitted at the time of their compilation. The authors or the copyists or the redactors must have become somewhat disturbed by the very obvious contradictions in the conclusions of these genealogies on the one hand and the theory of the virgin birth on the other, which was definitely to annul the paternity of Joseph. Notwithstanding their own convictions as portrayed in the genealogies, they, therefore, made attempts to establish the Divine origin of Jesus. In Matthew the word *begat* appeared thirty-eight times and in Luke the word *son* appeared seventy-six times. It must have been realized that not one of the ancestors mentioned in the two genealogies was born of a virgin, and, therefore, the words *begat* and *son* would have to have the same significance and meaning, a natural birth, with regard to Jesus, unless of course some addition or alteration was made to import the virgin birth. In Matthew the phrase originally was:

1 Luke, I: 41.
2 Luke, I: 43.
3 Luke, I: 46-55.
4 Compare Luke, I: 47, 49, 51 and 53 with Ps., II: 1-5, 8, and Luke, I: 48 with I Sam., I: 11: and Luke, I: 50 with Deut., VII: 9 and Luke I: 52 with Eccl., X: 14 and also Luke I: 54 with Ps., XCVII: 3.
5 Gen., XXV: 22.
6 Matt., I: 18.
7 Luke, I: 34.

And Jacob begat Joseph, and Joseph begat Jesus of Mary.

If we read this verse in the light of verses 1–6, where children of four women, *viz.*, Thamar, Rachab, Ruth, and the wife of Urias, are mentioned, we find that in each case the description is identical. Thus we are told :

Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar.[1] . . . Salmon begat Booz of Rachab and Booz begat Obed of Ruth.[2] . . . and David the King begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias,[3] . . . and Jacob begat Joseph and Joseph begat Jesus of Mary.[4]

Thus the same phraseology is used and the same meaning must be given. In none of these cases did the author, in the first instance, imply an immaculate conception.

Our certainty on this is confirmed by a text of Epiphanius which informs us that the early Christians, such as Corinthus and Carpocrates, used a Gospel of Matthew in which the genealogy was made the basis of the claim that Jesus was in reality the son of Joseph and Mary.[5] Eusebius attributes the same opinion, and the same defence of it, to the Ebionite Symanachus.[6] Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, two of the most ancient ecclesiastical writers, agree that the Ebionites, the early Jewish Christians, held this belief at the earliest period known to Christian history.[7] Clement condemned them for recognising Jesus only as the son of Joseph, through whom he is traced genealogically to David, and not as the son of God.[8]

But the simple phrase : *and Jacob begat Joseph and Joseph begat Jesus of Mary* was soon changed into :

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ

Discussing this change in this verse Rev. C. J. Scofield in his *Reference to the New Testament* had to admit :

The changed expression was introduced to convey that Jesus was not begotten of natural conception.[9]

One of the copyists made another alteration. He changed the phrase to :

And Jacob begat Joseph, and Joseph, to whom was married the *virgin Mary*, begat Jesus.[10]

1 Matt., I: 3.

2 Matt., I: 5.

3 Matt., I: 6.

4 Matt., I: 16. (The interpolation in the verse is omitted).

5 *Hær.*, XXX: 14.

6 Eusebius, *H.E.* VII: 17.

7 Justin, *Dial cum Trypho*, 48.

8 Clement, *Homil*, XVIII: 13.

9 Scofield, *The New Testament and Psalms*, 2.

10 Conybear, *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, 16. See also Peage's *Commentary on the Bible*, 701.

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8 Clement, *Homil*, XVIII: 13.

9 Scofield, *The New Testament and Psalms*, 2.

10 Conybear, *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, 16. See also Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, 701.

This introduction of the word *virgin* clearly, but rather awkwardly, exhibited the object for which the alteration was made; and the Church was compelled to disown it.

In the case of Luke we are less fortunate as the manuscripts do not permit us to trace the matter which has been altered. But that it has been changed is self-evident and sufficiently proved by the reading of the relevant verse :

> And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (*as was supposed*) the son of Joseph. . . . [1]

The words *as was supposed* are in brackets, and betray an addition, as Loisy justly observes : "to abrogate the idea of natural sonship which the text of this passage originally suggested."

Both Matthew [2] and Luke [3] speak of Mary as the *espoused wife* of Joseph. I do not wish to enter into a controversy but will only mention that modern critics have proved that this translation of the Greek text is incorrect and that it should be *wedded wife*.[4] The *Syriac Sinaiticus* uses the word *his wife* [5] The word *espousage* according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* means the condition of "being married, wedlock." and *espousal* means "the celebration of marriage nuptials or wedding." The compilers of this Dictionary make a significant observation and say :

> It seems probable that the sense "marriage" was the original one in English, and the sense *betrothal* arose at a later stage through the influence of the Canonical law.

The translators of the Authorised Version must have used the word *espoused wife* to indicate *wedded wife*, as opposed to a concubine, for there is no such thing as "betrothed wife." Webster in his Dictionary makes the interpretation still more clear. He explains *betroth* as : promise to take (as a future *espouse*) in marriage: and *espouse* as uniting in marriage to wed. The same meanings are given in Skeat's Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. In this connection I would like to quote a passage from Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

> That the virgin is still spoken of as "espoused" in Luke II. 5 is not to be taken necessarily an indication that the marriage had not taken place. Had she not been Joseph's wife, the Jewish custom would have forbidden her making the journey along with him.[6]

And to this, may I add, as mentioned by Matthew, living in the house of Joseph.[7] This certainly would have been an impossibility if Mary had been only betrothed to Joseph.

1 Luke, III : 23.

2 Matt., I: 18.

3 Luke, II: 5. How could Joseph have taken Mary to be taxed as his wife if he had not actually married her?

4 Rev. Dr. Leighton, *A Faith to Affirm*, 312.

5 Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 726.

6 Hastings' *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, 141.

7 Matt., I: 24.

In Matthew the theory of virgin birth is based on the following passage, wherein we are told that after rising from his sleep Joseph took unto him his wife.

> And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.[1]

The *Syriac Sinaiticus* makes the position perfectly clear for in place of this lengthy statement it has a simple one:

> And she bore to him a son and he called his name Jesus.[2]

Thus the birth of the son connects itself directly with the words of the preceding verse. To make the sense absolutely clear, I will quote the two verses together:

> Then Joseph arose from his sleep . . . . and took unto him his wife, and she bore to him a son and he called his name Jesus.[3]

No comments are necessary. The text speaks for itself.

In the case of Luke, I am able to advance the matter still further. The first two chapters of Luke bear definite testimony against the virgin birth theory. Were virgin birth to be presupposed, it would indeed be a very singular thing. I have already mentioned how the parents of Jesus "marvelled at those things which were spoken of" Jesus by Simon[4] and by the Shepherds[5] and also were unable to understand his words as a boy of twelve.[6]

We are also told that Jesus was born after Mary's "days were accomplished"[7] just like John the Baptist was born after the "full time" of Elisabeth.[8] How is it that in case of a supernatural birth all the laws relating to a natural birth had to be complied with?

But this is not all. We are further told:

> And when the days of *their* purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, *they* brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Temple.[9]

The redactors have substituted the word *her* in place of *their* and it so appears in the Authorised Version,[10] no doubt to remove the original error, because it was only the mother who was supposed to be unclean.[11] But the error, if an error it be, serves to show that at least the evangelist regarded Joseph as the real father of Jesus; they could not have thought of him as unclean, if Jesus had been born of a virgin. To meet this objection, it has been suggested that the word *their* related to Mary and Jesus. But Jesus was "the Holy of the Holies," and in any case under the law as laid down in the Third Book of Moses, Leviticus, a

1 Matt., I: 25
2 See *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 2961.
3 Matt., I: 24—25.
4 Luke, II: 33.
5 Luke, II: 18.
6 Luke, II: 50.
7 Luke, II: 6.
8 Luke, I: 57.
9 Luke, II: 22.
10 Revised Version, p. 1127.
11 Lev., XII: 4.

newly-born child never became unclean. Further, if the birth had been brought about by supernatural means, no occasion to stress any uncleanness on Mary's part could have arisen. This incident shows that the progress of the child in its mother's womb must have been in accordance with the laws of nature: the very idea of purification suggests it.

The whole of Luke, therefore, not only knows nothing of the virgin birth but rests upon natural birth. As in Matthew, the entire theory is based on two verses in Luke which, as I will now show, are also later interpolations. They read:

> Then said Mary unto the Angel, How shall this be, seeing *I know* not a man? And the Angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost *shall* come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest *shall* overshadow thee; therefore, also that holy thing which *shall* be born of thee *shall* be called the *Son of God*.[1]

In verse 34, *know* is in the present tense and Mary does not speak of the future, while the angel is using the future tense all the while. It may also be stated, and Dummelow agrees,[2] that Mary takes the words of the angel as fulfilment in the ordinary way of nature. The reply of the Angel (verse 35) is only to express with great clearness what he has already said in verses 30—33, which admit without any difficulty of being understood—as Mary in fact so understood them—as referring to the birth of the Messiah from a human marriage. Peake, while commenting on these verses, says:

> Many scholars regard these verses as an interpolation . . . The idea of verse 35 and its terminology are not Hebraic; "Spirit" in Hebrew is feminine But it is possible to take "overshadow" in its primary Greek sense of hide and conceal. Pregnant women were regarded as peculiarly liable to the assault of evil spirits (cf. Rev., XII: 1—6). We may thus have here the idea of Satan lying in wait for the future Messiah (cf. Rev., XII : 1—5); to avoid any molestation the Power of the Highest will conceal the mother till the danger is past. Or it may be that *the child, while conceived in the usual way*, was to receive a special pre-natal sanctity . . . like John[3]

Again, if we proceed further, the narrative makes the Holy Ghost descend only twice. The first time the object was:

> And it came to pass that when Elisabeth heard salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.[4]

Elizabeth, it is noteworthy, is filled with the Holy Ghost and not Mary. For the second visit of the Holy Ghost, we have to skip over to the third chapter:

> Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice

1 Luke, I: 34-35.

2 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 739.

3 Peake, *Comm. on the Bible*, 726 Italics are mine).

4 Luke, I: 41.

came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased.[1]

The birth of Jesus took place betwixt these two visits. On these facts alone Luke can be said to give a direct lie to the virgin birth theory.

But, as already stated, the virgin birth theory is based on verses 34-35. And Weiss says they are spurious,[2] a conclusion with which many authorities agree. The Revised Version shows the alteration,[3] and Hastings says:

> Removal of verses 34-35, which contain the only reference to virgin birth, as interpolations, is justified.[4]

Realizing the position that the relevant verses regarding the virgin birth in both Matthew and Luke are interpolations, the compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* were compelled to come to the only possible conclusion that

> The virgin birth disappears from the source altogether.[5]

I need not carry the matter any further.

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1 Luke, III: 21—22.

2 Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu Vom Reiche Gottes*, 312.

3 Revised Version, p. 112.

4 Hastings's *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 806.

5 *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 2957.

CHAPTER VII

THE FAMILY OF IMRAN

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Gospels leave us in ignorance concerning the parents of Jesus and his earthly life. The early Christians must have possessed more accurate information about them: but there were very strong reasons for not transmitting them to the second generation of Christians. Almost immediately after the crucifixion was begun that labour of faith which resolved to elevate Jesus more and more above humanity, which must necessarily have condemned everything that tended in the opposite direction. Too many details about the earthly family of Jesus, and its actual status, which was certainly not too distinguished, could not fail at that time to be very embarrassing. When Paul announced that he was interested only in the crucified and glorified Christ,[1] he gave the exact formula for the transformation of the life of Jesus in the minds of the earliest generation of Christians At the same time he revealed the secret of the rapidity with which authentic recollections concerning the family of Jesus, and his life prior to baptism, were obliterated.

The earliest tradition believed that the name of Jesus' mother was Maryam (Mari) and the name of his father was Joseph.[2] I am alive to the fact that, soon after, Christian apologists challenged the correctness of Joseph being father of Jesus.

Joseph was a carpenter. Jesus learnt his father's trade.[3] He, therefore, came from the ranks of the simple classes, from among those who laboured and *"ate bread in the sweat of their faces."*[4] He experienced their troubles and poverty, as well as their hatred of the rich[5]

We know very little regarding Mary, and what the Gospels say about her is totally insufficient. In view of the fact that the doctrine of *Christotokus* centred round Mary, their silence about her is all the more remarkable. Her lineage is completely unknown except that she was a cousin of Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and was "of the daughters of Aaron"[6] *i.e.*, Amran or *'Imran.* Thus we gather that Mary also belonged to the family of *Imran* or, in other words, was a descendant of *Imran.*

1 I Cor., I: 18, 23-24; II: 2.

2 *Ency. Brit.*, Art. *Genealogies of Jesus.*

3 *Gospel of Thomas*, C. 3.

4 Gen., III: 19

5 Matt., XIX: 23-24.

6 Luke, I: 5.

The Apocryphal Gospels, however, furnish us with some material with which we can reconstruct the early life of Jesus, but unfortunately they also contain and end in contradictory fantasies; and, with the growing influence of the Pauline creed, succumbed gradually to the glorification of the Lord: and, therefore, have to be considered very carefully

The narrative I am about to describe has been collected from various sources. I will here, very briefly, discuss them first.

The *Protevangelium Jacobi* or the *Gospel Relating to the Birth and Infancy of Jesus*, as known to us, was discovered in the sixteenth century by Postel during his travels in the Middle East. It is also styled as the *Gospel of James*. Zahn and Kruger regard it as a very early document and place it in the first decade of the second century. Origen, writing in the early half of the third century, while referring to this Gospel said :

> The author was in early times universally believed to be the Lord's brother, the head of the Church of Jerusalem.

Origen was, of course, referring to James the Just, for this Gospel begins : "I, James, wrote this history. . . . ." Clement of Alexandria[1] and Justin Martyr[2] not only referred to it but relied on it. There exist its recensions in Greek and Latin and an Armenian version is also in existence. It was read in several Churches up to the fifth century. I must, however, point out that this Gospel, as it has come down to us, is not in its original form. From time to time many additions and alterations had been made :

> This happened, there is ground for believing, in the 5th century. The abrupt introduction of Joseph in the first person (Ch. 18-20) gives convincing evidence that that and the following sections are not from the hand of the writer of the Gospel.[3]

To begin with, Origen gives a different ending of the Gospel Again, certain incidents have been introduced which are in keeping with the later popular mythical belief of the Christians, and it is for this reason that in its present form the Catholic Church, in particular, considers it to be "the most edifying Treatise which was read in several Churches."[4] If the form of the Gospel as it existed before the fourth century had been the same as it is to-day it would not have been condemned, as it was, by three successive decrees : The Decrees of the Western Church at Damascus (382 C.E.), of Innocent I (405 C.E.) and of Gelasius (496 C.E.). On the contrary in its present form, and, no doubt, because of the incidents interpolated by hagiographers, this Gospel is maintained by the Catholic Church to be the "source of various traditions current among the faithful. They are of value in indicat-

1 *Stromatas*, VIII : 16-93.
2 Dial, 78, 100 : *Apol* : 33.
3 Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. I, p. 681.
4 The Catholic Ency., Art. *Apocryphal Gospels*

ing the veneration paid to Mary at a very early stage."[1]

According to Postel, this Gospel was very popular with the Syrian Nestorians even in the sixteenth century.

The second is the *Evangalium de Nativitate de Maria* or the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary. In this Gospel the history of Mary is narrated and it ends with the birth of Jesus. The observations I have made about *Protovangelium Jacobi* equally apply, perhaps with greater force, to this Gospel.

The third, is the *Gospel of the Ebionites*. The Ebionites were Jewish Christians, and James the Just was the head of their Church at Jerusalem. They denounced Paul as a heretic and rejected all his Epistles as unauthoritative. No wonder that in the following centuries they themselves were stigmatized as heretics. They observed the Law themselves and held its observance as absolutely necessary for salvation and binding on all, and refused fellowship with all who did not comply with it. They believed that:

Jesus is the Messiah; yet a mere man, born by natural generation to Joseph and Mary.[2]

This Gospel was likewise referred to by Irenaeus,[3] Epiphanius,[4] Hippolytus,[5] Origen[6] and Tertullian.[7] The Tubingen School held that primitive Christianity was itself Ebionism. Mosheim says that although the Ebionites believed in the celestial mission of Jesus, yet they regarded him as a man born of Joseph and Mary, according to the ordinary course of nature.[8]

And lastly, *the Gospel according to the Hebrews* is supposed to be the oldest Gospel. It was freely quoted by Ignatius in his *Epistle to the Church at Smyrna*.[9] This Gospel was written in Aramaic, the language which Jesus and the Apostles spoke. Sometimes it is confused with the so-called *Gospel of the Nazarenes*; and while considering the one as being only another edition of the other, the Tubingen School held that the teachings and traditions contained therein represented the belief of the primitive Christians. Jerome, who held a very high opinion about this Gospel, regarded it as the original Gospel according to Matthew.

There are other Gospels : The *Gospel of Peter*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the Gospel according to Judas Iscariot, and many others but I need not go into their details

1 The *Catholic Ency.*, Art. *Apocryphal Gospels*.
2 Hippol. Phil., VII : 22. See also Hastings' *History of Apostolic Church*, 318-322
3 Adv. *Hær.*, I. XXVI
4 Epi. *Hær.*, XXIX, 9 ; 4.
5 Hippol. *Hær.*, X : 18.
6 *Hær.*, XXXIII.
7 Turt, Icle, *Hær.*, III : 12.
8 Mosheim *An Ecclesiastical History : Ancient and Modern*, Vol. I, 214.
9 *Ibid.*, III · I,

Having thus mentioned in some detail the sources of the narrative I proceed to describe it, of course, without any of the gloss of the later Christians.

Joachim (Ioachim) a wealthy farmer of Nazareth, and his wife Hanna (Anna) lamented over the fact that they had no children [1] Joachim was told to his chagrin by Reuben, a Jewish father who could boast of a numerous family, that his childlessness disqualified him from presenting his offerings to God. Reuben looked Joachim in the face contemptuously and addressed him as a man "who had not given any offspring to Israel." With an aggrieved heart Joachim went to the Temple, remained there till late at night and prayed to the Lord to bless him with a child. In the meantime Hanna, his wife, was also reminded of her childlessness as she saw, through a window of her house, a sparrow's nest in a laurel bush. She had also been driven with jeers from the Lord's Temple; and she also lamented :

> Woe is me! Who begot me and what womb produced me, for I am reproached, and they have driven me with jeers from the Lord's Temple.
>
> Woe is me! What am I like?
> I am not like the birds in Heaven,
> for the birds of Heaven are fruitful before
> Thee, O Lord.
>
> Woe is me! What am I like?
> I am not like this earth,
> for even this earth bears its fruit in season
> and blesses Thee, O Lord.[2]

By these lamentations Hanna profaned the Lord's Day. Judith her maid turned on her and said :

> Why should I wish you any evil for not listening to my words, since the Lord Himself has closed thy womb, and not given thee any offspring for Israel ?

Hanna dressed herself, out of respect for the Lord's Day, and, as her husband had not yet returned, she bewailed again :

> Bewail must I my sorrows,
> And bewail must I my childlessness.

And Hanna prayed :

> O God of Israel ! bless me and harken unto my prayer, as Thou didst bless the womb of Sarah and gave her a son, even Isaac.[3]

At this time an angel appeared and assured her, just as he did to Joachim in the Temple, that the Lord would bless her with a child. Hanna answered with a promise :

> As the Lord my God liveth, if I bring forth a child, I will bring it for a gift unto Thee, my God.[4]

1 *Prot. Jac.*, C. I.
2 *Ibid.*, III : 1.
3 *Ibid.*, III : 3.
4 *Ibid.*, IV : 1 ; *Evang. de Nat. de Mar.*, C. III.

Eventually, Mary was born to Hanna on the 15th of Hathor;[1] and although according to the Jewish ideas she had to be sorrowful for the child was not a son, still she thankfully praised the Lord for His gift and sang a song. This song is more appropriate than is usually the case with such songs in the Bible Hanna thanked the Lord and sang :

I will sing a song unto the Lord my God,
for He hath visited me, and taken from me the reproach of my enemies ;

The Lord hath given me fruit of righteousness, a single fruit, but manifold in His sight.

Who will tell the sons of Reuben—
that Hanna giveth suck.

Harken ! Harken ! Ye twelve tribes of Israel :
Hanna giveth suck.[2]

Hanna then proceeded to fulfil her vows of consecrating the child. Mary was not allowed to walk on the common ground till she was taken at the age of three to the Synagogue, where she was entrusted to the high priest, Zacharias.[3]

A good deal of discussion has taken place as to where Zacharias and John the Baptist lived. Luke says in a city in Juda, but he contradicts himself when he refers to a desert. He does not name the town and the only references by name to the places where John was living are given in John : Bethabara[4] and Ænon near Salim.[5] Bethabara was east of the river and a day's distance from Cana of Galilee.

Zacharias belonged to the tribe of Abijah, and he may have been a descendant of those who were left behind by Zorobabel with the first band of exiles under the leadership of Shahbazzer. It is true that at one time Zacharias must have lived in the priestly towns, but the Talmud tells us of many high priests living away from them. Zacharias must have taken Elisabeth to these places to escape the fury of Herod.

Mary was taken to Zacharias and was placed under his guardianship. She began to live with him. During her stay in the Temple she was visited and fed by angels and honoured by Divine visions.[6]

Mary arrived at womanhood when she was twelve years old. She then had an angelic apparition.[7] A slightly different version of this apparition is given by Luke.[8]

1 Forbes Robinson, *The Coptic Apocryphal Gospel*, 1.
2 *Prot. Jac.*, IV : 3.
3 *Ibid.*, VII : 1.
4 John, I : 28.
5 *Ibid.*, III : 23.
6 *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, VI : *The Coptic Life of Mary*, II A.
7 *Evang. de Nat. de Mar.*, C. 6.
8 Luke I : 28.

In three of the Gospels under discussion the visit of Mary to Elisabeth at this juncture is omitted, for the obvious reason that the apparition took place at a time when Mary was living with Zacharias and consequently with Elisabeth. In the fourth it is clearly a later and self-contradictory interpolation

Mary had to leave the Temple because of her age. "No exception was made on her account to the rule which forbade all full grown women to be seen within the walls of the Holy Temple. The high priest took counsel as to what course they should adopt in order that she should not defile the Lord's Temple."[1]

And the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells and went in unto the Holy of Holies and prayed concerning her. And lo, an angel of the Lord appeared saying unto him : Zacharias, Zacharias, go forth and assemble them that are bachelors of Israel, and let them bring every man a rod, and to whosoever the Lord shall show a sign, *his wife shall she be*.[2]

And Zacharias in conformity with the procedure of old[3] summoned the bachelors of Israel[4] who lived around or near the place. Zacharias proclaimed :

Let each bring his rod (some versions say—a reed used for writing) and whoever has a sign shown to him by the Lord *his shall the woman be*.[5]

The narrative goes on :

And Joseph cast down his adze and ran to meet the heralds, and when they were gathered together, they went to the high priest. The rods were thrown in the fountain outside the Temple . . . when Joseph's rod emerged a dove came down and sat beside it.[6]

Joseph was then married to Mary,[7] and after some time took her unto his house (which was in Bethlehem Nasoriyyah).[8] The marriage is consummated and Mary conceives.[9] The age of Mary "when these mysteries came to pass" was fourteen years.[10]

Some Gospels state that immediately after his marriage Joseph left Mary and went to another place to attend to his work, and that the apparition to Mary took place during his absence The place to which Joseph is alleged to have gone is not named and no one mentions the period of his absence. Such vague platitudes cannot be accepted to cover a period of four years. In any case there was nothing to prevent Joseph from returning earlier to his house, resuming his married life and then returning

1 The *Gospel of Mary*. See Yuo Hasen, *The Sacred Shrine*, 201.
2 *Prot. Jac.*, VIII : 3 ; *Evang. de Nativ. de Mar.* C. 7.
3 Hos., IV : 12 ; Ezek., XXI : 21.
4 One of the versions says *widowers*.
5 *Prot. Jac.*, IX : 1. *Evang. de Nat. de Mar.* C. 7-8., *cf.* Nub., XVII : 2-5.
6 *Ibid.*
7 The details of the event are given in the Armenian Version, Ch. IV.
8 *Evang. de Nat. de Mar.*, C. 7-8.
9 *The Gospel of the Ebionites, The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, IV : 3.
10 *Prot. Jac.*, XII : 3 ; The *Gospel of Mary*. See also Yuo Hasen, *The Sacred Shrine*, 206. Some versions say *twelve*, others *sixteen*.

to his work. I have already given detailed reasons for rejecting this journey. In any case the apparition took place before the consummation of the marriage.

The *Protevangelium Jacobi* also narrates that some time after Mary had been received into Joseph's house, she, with other women, was charged with the making of the Dividing Veil for the Temple of the Lord to screen the Holy of Holies,[1] and that it fell to her lot to spin the true purple and the scarlet. Mary "did not work with the other women but took the material with her to her home,"[2] and Joseph had to take a vow of separation as provided for in the Old Testament[3] During the period of the vow he had to separate himself from all worldly things and particularly from any carnal connection with his wife. Dummelow tells us that "this vow could either be for a limited period or for life."[4] He also says that after the expiry of the period of the vow the devotee "returned to ordinary life."[5] Joseph was made to take this vow to prevent "uncleanness" of Mary while she was engaged in making the veil. This vow was meant for men only.[6] Mary had "secluded herself in her home to conceal her condition from the children of Israel. Mary went to the Temple to deliver her finished work."[7]

We are then suddenly told that when the authorities of the Temple discovered Mary's condition, Joseph was charged with incontinence; and both of them[8] were questioned :

> Wherefore hath thou done this, and wherefore hath thou humbled thy soul and forgotten the Lord thy God?

The narrative goes on :

> And Joseph was full of weeping. And the priest said : I will give you to drink of the water of the conviction of the Lord, and it will make manifest your sins before your eyes. And the priest took thereof and made Joseph drink, and sent him to the hill country and he returned whole. He made Mary also drink and sent her into the hill country. And she returned whole. And all the people marvelled because sin appeared not in them.[9]

Joseph and Mary had not, in fact, transgressed any commandments of the Lord, they had only violated, if at all, a ritual set up by the authorities of the Temple and, therefore, as was to be expected, they passed the test scatheless.

1 *Prot. Jac.*, XIII : 1 ; *cf* Exod., XXVI : 31.
2 The *Gospel of Mary*. See Yrjö Hiren, *The Sacred Shrine*, 205.
3 Nub. VI : 1-21.
4 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 104.
5 *Ibid.*
6 1 Mac., III : 49 ; Acts, XVIII : 18.
7 The *Gospel of Mary*. See Yrjö Hiren, *The Sacred Shrine*, 206.
8 Nub., V : 6-7.
9 *Prot. Jac.*, XVI : 1-2. *cf.* Nub. V : 18.

Consequently the high priest said to Joseph and Mary:

Since the Lord God has not disclosed your sins, neither do I condemn you.[1]

So the high priest sent them away.

and Joseph took Mary and departed unto his house rejoicing and glorifying the Lord of Israel.[2]

Mary was innocent and so, of course, was Joseph, because the conception had taken place during the interval which had elapsed between the time of marriage and the time when Mary was entrusted with the making of the veil and before Joseph had taken the vow. These facts are inherently implied, though not specifically stated, in the narrative because the discovery could not have been made by the authorities of the Temple till after the pregnancy was a little advanced. Consequently, the entrustment of the making of the veil could not have covered the same period. Besides, Mary at her marriage was twelve years of age, and at the time of the making of the veil when "these mysteries came to pass" she was over thirteen years of age.

In one of the narratives, it is true, it is recorded that Joseph had left Mary soon after the marriage and that on his return he was distressed to find her condition and charged her before the authorities of the Temple. She had, therefore, to go through the ordeal of drinking the bitter waters and was subsequently declared to be innocent. This version is false and was introduced to support the supernatural birth of Jesus. I repeat that this version is false, because Joseph also was made to go through the ordeal. The law did not provide for the man to go through the ordeal if he had charged his wife with adultery. If this version was correct Mary, and Mary alone, should have been made to drink the bitter waters. The fact that Joseph also had to take the bitter waters is conclusive evidence of the fact that the real charge was against him, and Mary was made to drink the bitter waters merely because, in such circumstances, the Divine wrath could only demonstratively affect a woman. Mary, therefore, was made to do this so as to furnish evidence against Joseph and not because she had been charged with, or suspected of, adultery. Had the contrary been the case, *i.e.*, had Mary been charged with adultery, she alone would have been made to drink the bitter water[3] and then stoned to death.[4]

The narrative continues that, in keeping with the traditions then obtaining and, may I add, even to-day obtaining in the East, Mary went to her cousin's house to give birth to her first-born. She had to pass Nazareth on her way. Thus Jesus was born at Nazareth as any other child would have been in wedlock, and in support of this assertion it is mentioned that "the child took the breast from his mother."[5]

1 *Prot. Jac.*, XVI: 3.
2 *Ibid.*
3 Nub., V: 24.
4 Lev., XX: 10.
5 Gospel according to the Hebrews.

From this stage Mary is relegated to the position of a forlorn mother, though she now and again appears, according to the Gospels, in the story. Twelve years after she is made to accompany Joseph and Jesus to the Temple at Jerusalem and then she appears at the scene of Calvary.

The abridged review in which I have striven as far as possible to employ the original expressions of the narratives is based upon the oldest MSS and translations of the various Gospels

The Canonical Gospels also tell us that there were other children of Joseph and Mary besides Jesus. But those who raised Jesus to godhead and who created belief in the virgin birth, could not tolerate the idea of Joseph having ever consummated his marriage with Mary. The peculiar view of incarnation having been linked with the contemporary view of the baseness of matter, led the Christians, who started the worship of the virgin mother, to discover, or invent, the probability that the *brothers* and *sisters* of Jesus referred to in the New Testament were either half-brothers and half-sisters, being children of Joseph from a previous marriage, or cousins only.[1]

I have used the words "the children of Joseph and Mary" because the Synoptics have no hesitation in giving Jesus brothers and sisters. In the Gospels they are referred to in the most natural way. We read :

> And there came his mother and his brethren, and standing without, they sent unto him, to call him and the multitude was sitting about him, and they said unto him : Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without, ask for thee.[2]

Again, people of Nazareth are represented as saying :

> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses and Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters also with us?[3]

Paul is even more clear, when he says :

> But others of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.[4]

With this must be read the tradition that James the Just, a brother of Jesus, was the head of the Church at Jerusalem.[5]

I will not embark on any lengthy discussion of the arbitrary theories, based as they are on mere assertions. They are three-fold. The first, the *Helvidian* mentioned by Helodius in the time of Jerome, which held that the brothers and sisters were the children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus. They relied on the reference to Jesus as the first-born.[6]

1 Lightfoot, *Brethren of the Lord*, 75.
2 Mark, III : 31.
3 Mark, VI : 3. See also Matt., XII : 46-47, Luke, VIII : 19 ; John, II : 12 : VII : 3; Acts, I : 14.
4 Gal., I : 19.
5 Euseb., H.E. II : 1, 6.
6 Matt., I : 25; Luke, II : 70.

The second, the *Epiphanian*, was sponsored by St. Epiphanius, which declared that the brothers and sisters were the issue of a previous marriage of Joseph. The third, the *Hieronymian*, was of St. Jerome himself, by which the brothers and sisters of Jesus were relegated to the status of mere cousins of the Lord, the children of Clopas, a brother of Joseph, and "the other Mary"

It was the last-mentioned theory which found favour with the later Christians, though it is totally devoid of any historical foundation While commenting on this last theory Glover says:

> That cousins in some parts of the world are confused in common speech with brothers may be admitted, but to the ordinary Greek reader *brothers* meant *brothers* and not cousins, which was something different.[1]

But we need not go by conjectures. We know the names of the brothers of Jesus[2] and also the sons of "the other Mary;"[3] and they are different.

As a last resort, it has been suggested that the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus were no other than the groups of his followers united to each other by the bonds of faith; and reliance is placed on the fact that early Christians spoke of themselves as brethren and that Jesus styled them as brethren in his direction to them to proceed to Galilee.[4]

I have already referred to the incident that the mother and brothers of Jesus went to get hold of him. He was then with his disciples and they mentioned to Jesus that his mother and brothers had come. This, I think, fully disposes of this special plea.

No one can ever dream the episode of the critical neighbours of Nazareth, who would not accept a prophet because they knew the family, that although Jesus had no blood brothers, yet their rejection was based because of his half-brothers or cousins only. When history gives us brothers and sisters and the apologists cousins only, in any other case the decision of an historian would be quite clear.

I will just mention here another fact: Jesus had a twin brother, Judas Thomas[5] who is also called Didymus[6] *the twin*.

It is not a matter for wonder that the evangelic texts or common-sense traditions could not prevail for any length of time. The explanation is very simple. The early Christians, very shortly after the crucifixion, could not reconcile themselves to the idea that the mother of Jesus, once her mission had been accomplished, was relegated to the level of an ordinary woman.

1 Glover, *The Jesus of History*, 23.
2 Matt., XIII: 55; Mark, VI: 3.
3 Mark, XV: 40.
4 Matt., XXVIII: 10; *cf*. John, XX: 17.
5 Thilo, *Acta Thomæ*, 94.
6 John, XX: 24.

The doctrine of the virginity of the *Christotokus*, that is to say, *the mother of Christ*, was gradually replaced by the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and finally Joseph himself was made a saint. It was the asceticism of the fourth and fifth centuries which finally established the beliefs, which subsequently became one of the Articles of Faith, concerning the perfect and perpetual virginity of Mary.

But the fact remains that the first Christians in the first century and some, like the Ebionites, for a much longer period, continued to believe that Jesus was the *first born* of Joseph and Mary. They at that time were not interested in Mary on her own account, and it was a matter of indifference to them that she continued to live as Joseph's wife and gave birth to other children.

In conclusion, I can but observe that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary and belonged to a humble family which consisted of half a dozen or more children besides himself.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR-'AN

The immaculate conception of Jesus, his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, are the essential features of Christianity; but not of Islam. They neither separately nor collectively form any part of the creed of a Muslim, nor do they touch any of the Five Pillars of Islam. But inasmuch as they do constitute an integral part of the Divinity of Jesus, a belief in any one or all of them would tantamount to and is likely to be construed as a negation of the very basic principle of Islam—the Unity of God.

Christians, having hopelessly failed in establishing these ill-founded dogmas from the Gospels, have from time immemorial tried to support them by deliberately misconstruing certain Qur-'anic verses. The Christians of to-day, in adopting these tactics, merely follow the tracks of their co-religionists of the seventh century. Their object has been, and is, twofold: they wish to deride and belittle the value of the Holy Qur-'an by asserting that, like the Gospels, this Book also supports these absurdities and cannot therefore, be a better guide to humanity: and, secondly, they try to mislead Muslims into believing that the Holy Qur-'an itself proves the truth of the very dogmas, or at least some of them, upon which Christians rest the Divinity of Christ. Rodwell, in the *Preface* to his *Translation of the Koran*, makes the Christian point of view very clear. He says:

> A line of argument to be adopted by a Christian missionary in dealing with a Muhammadan should be, not to attack Islam as a mass of error, *but to show that it contains fragments of disjointed truth*—that it is based upon Christianity and Judaism, partially understood, especially upon the latter, without any appreciation of its typical character pointing to Christianity as a final dispensation.[1]

In other words, Rodwell advises Christian missionaries to convince Muslims that the Divinity of Christ stands established because, as he imagines, support for Christian dogmas can be found in the Holy Qur-'an.

It is a notorious fact that in the first four centuries of Islam, and after the death of the Holy Prophet, some Jews and Christians deceitfully joined the fold of Islam to undermine its very foundations. It is equally true that the vast majority of Jews and Christians who embraced Islam did so sincerely; but they unwittingly brought their traditions and stories with them, and these are known as *Israeliat*: Every student of Muslim history knows that these two categories of converts introduced,

[1] Rodwell, *Preface to the Translation of the Koran*, XXII (Italics are mine.)

by design or otherwise, the whole mass of their apocryphal literature in the *commentaries* of the Holy Qur-'an. They went further and falsely attributed many of their own fables to the Holy Prophet—either as being events in his life or as his sayings. These tales, stories and spurious traditions have been seized upon by Christian writers on Islam, Sale and Muir not excepted, and they have further distorted and fashioned the facts to suit the taste of the Christians of Europe and elsewhere. They were, as Sale confesses, out "to expose" the Holy Qur-'an as a "manifest forgery" and, for this purpose, did not hesitate to change the text (in their translation) of the Book. Mendacity and hypocrisy could go no further! Speaking of Sale, Rodwell says:

> Sale has, however, followed Maracci too closely, especially by introducing his paraphrastic comments into the body of the text.[1]

But long before Christian missionaries could make any real use of those spurious matters, introduced by their forefathers, Muslim scholars exposed their wicked and mischievous designs They have, time and again, warned Muslims against accepting these fantastic stories. Ibn-Khaldun, for instance, while discussing some ancient commentators of the Holy Qur-'an in his *Muqaddama* said:

> Their books and their reports contain what is good and what is bad and what may be accepted and what should be rejected, and the reason for this is: when these people (Jews and Christians) embraced Islam, they retained their stories which had no connection with the commandments of the Islamic law, such as the origin of creation, and things relating to the future and the wars etc. . . . Commentaries on the Holy Qur-'an were soon filled with these stories of theirs and as these do not deal with the Commandments, so their correctness is not sought after to the extent of acting upon them, and the commentators take them up rather carelessly, and they have thus filled up their comments with them.[2]

Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah, the *Mujaddid* of the Twelfth Century of Hijra, the saintly author of *Hujjat-Ullah-al-Baligha*, gave the same warning when he wrote:

> And it is necessary to know that most of the Israelitish stories that have crept into the commentaries and biographies are copied from the stories of Jews and Christians, and *no Commandments* or beliefs can be based upon them.[3]

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal summed up the Muslim point of view and declared that these commentaries and biographies "are not based on any principles." Among Muslims of recent times the late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh condemned, in his *Khutabat-i-Ahmadiyya*, these commentators and biographers. *Maulvi* Muhammad Ali is equally emphatic when he says:

1 Rodwell, *Preface to the Translation of the Koran*, XXIV.

2 Ibn-Khaldun, *Muqaddama*, Vol. I, 481.

3 *Hazrat* Shah Wali Ullah, *Hujjat-Ullah-al-Baligha*, 176.

> No Muslim scholar has attached the same value to the biographical reports. On the other hand all Muslim critics recognise that the biographers never made much effort to sift truth from error. . . . In fact in some of the commentaries the reports cited are puerile nonsense. Even the Commentary of Ibn Jarir, with all its value as a literary production, cannot be relied upon.[1]

But although these commentaries and biographies are literary works of considerable merit, yet they express merely the opinions of their authors. We have the two main Islamic sources : the Holy Qur-'an and the *Hadis*, in their pristine purity: and we can test and check the correctness of these commentaries and biographies, and accept or reject them accordingly.

In considering the various verses of the Holy Qur-'an we should not ignore the universally accepted rules of interpretation, which I have already discussed,[2] nor indeed should we overlook the fundamental and basic principles laid down by the Holy Qur-'an itself. I will confine myself here to some of these basic principles which are relevant to the subject under discussion.

All Prophets of God (including Jesus) were human beings

Says the Holy Qur-'an :

> And We did not send before you (Muhammad) any but *men* to whom We had sent revelation. . . . And We did not make their bodies not eating the food, and neither were they to abide (for ever).[3]

All Prophets according to the Holy Qur-'an were therefore human beings, with human bodies. The reformation of men, according to the Holy Qur-'an, was entrusted to men because only a man could serve as a model for mankind. The Holy Qur-'an, asserts in the clearest possible terms that men only, to whom God revealed His will, were sent as His Messengers, and supports this assertion by pointing out that all Prophets did require and eat food and that they did not live for ever. In response to a question : "What ! has Allah raised up a mortal to be an apostle?" the Holy Prophet is made to reply :

> Say: Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers We would have sent down to them from heaven an angel as a Messenger.[4]

In another place the Holy Qur-'an states that Noah was sent from amongst themselves,[5] that is, from amongst his tribesmen, and it is recorded that the chiefs of his tribes, while addressing their people raised a similar objection :

> This (Noah) is nothing but a mortal like yourselves, eating of what you eat from and drinking of what you drink.[6]

1 M. Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, 77-79

2 *Supra*, pp. 38-42.

3 The Holy Qur-'an, XXI : 7-8.

4 *Ibid.*, XVII : 95.

5 *Ibid.*, XXIII : 32.

6 *Ibid.*, XXIII : 33.

Again, Pharaoh and his chiefs also objected to Moses and Aaron in the same terms :

> What, shall we believe in two mortals like ourselves, while their people serve us?1

After referring to these incidents and speaking of the various Prophets of God as mortals, the Holy Qur-'an introduces Jesus in verse 50 of the same chapter. The Book, in many places, asserts the humanity, and challenges the divinity of Jesus. Thus we read :

> The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle, apostles before him have indeed passed away, and his mother was a truthful woman, *they both used to eat food.* See how We make the communications clear to them (the Christians), then behold, how they are turned away.2

The prayer of Jesus : "Give us this day our daily bread"3 is alluded to in the Holy Qur-'an in the following terms :

> Jesus, son of Mary, said : O Allah our Lord ! send down to us food . . . and grant us means of subsistence and Thou art the Best of providers 4

This verse also proves that Jesus was not the son of God, or an incarnation of God, for he felt the necessity of asking for food for his very subsistence.

All Prophets of God (including Jesus) were servants of God

Says the Holy Qur-'an :

> And We did not send before thee any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no God but Me, therefore serve Me. And they say : the Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son; glory be to Him. Nay, they (the Prophets) are *honoured servants* They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandments do they act.5

To emphasize that Jesus was not a son of God the Holy Qur-'an speaks of him as one of the Messengers of God,6 an apostle and a servant of God, and makes the position perfectly clear in the following words :

> O followers of the Book ! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of Allah and His word which He communicated to Mary and an inspiration from Him. Believe, therefore, in Allah and His apostle and say not Three. Desist it is better for you; Allah is only One; far be it from His glory that He should have a son; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His and Allah is Sufficient Protector.7

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XXIII: 47.
2 *Ibid.*, V: 75. This seems decidedly to point to Matthew, XI: 19, where Jesus [illegible] a man who came eating and drinking.
3 Matt. VI: 11.
4 The Holy Qur-'an, V: 114.
5 *Ibid.*, XXI: 25-27.
6 *Ibid.*, IV: 163.
7 *Ibid.*, IV: 171.

Again :

> Certainly they disbelieve who say : Surely Allah is the third (person) of the Three; and there is no god but One God : and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve. . . . The Messiah, son of Mary, is (naught) but an apostle. . . .1

And again :

> And when a description of the son of Mary is given, lo! your people raise a clamour thereat . . . . he was naught but a servant on whom We bestowed favour and We made him an example for the children of Israel.2

Then certain sayings of Jesus are recorded :

> He (Jesus) said· Surely, I am, a servant of Allah. He has given me the book and made me a Prophet.3

And finally :

> When Allah will say : O Jesus, son of Mary did thou say to men : Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah, he will say : Glory be to Thee, it did not befit (me) that I should say what I had no right to (say); if I had said, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind. Surely, Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things. I did not say aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with ' That serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the Watcher over them, and Thou art Witness of all things.4

Thus the Holy Qur-'an proclaims that Jesus was a man, a human being who ate and drank, a mortal who did die. The Book points out these facts to refute his divinity.

Law of Procreation

The Holy Qur-'an repeatedly points out, that the Law of Procreation is the union of a male and a female of the same species, that there is no exception to this rule and that, therefore, the Universal Creator in His All-Wisdom created pairs of all species Says the Holy Qur-'an :

> Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.5

> And He Who created pairs of all things.6

> And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful 7

In these verses the word used is either *zaujain* or *azwajan.* These words signify : kinds, species or pairs. In these verses it is, therefore, asserted that vegetation, minerals, animals, human beings—in fact, the entire creation, was made in pairs. It was only in the beginning of this century that the researches

1 The Holy Qur-'an, V · 73, 75.
2 *Ibid.* XLIII : 57-59.
3 *Ibid.*, XIX : 30
4 *Ibid.*, V : 116-117.
5 *Ibid.*, XXXVI : 36.
6 *Ibid.*, XLIII : 12.
7 *Ibid.*, LI : 49.

of Sir Jagadish Chandar Bose finally proved that all vegetation, plants and trees included, had two kinds : male and female. But the Holy Qur-'an had disclosed this fact some thirteen hundred years ago in the following terms :

> And of the fruits He has placed it in pairs (male and female).[1]

Again:

> Then We have brought forth species of various vegetation [2]

Dealing with animals, the Holy Qur-'an says :

> And (of) beasts and cattle are various species of it likewise.[3]

> The Originator of the heavens and the earth : He made males for you from among yourselves; and mates of the cattle too.[4]

Discussing the creation of mankind the Holy Qur-'an states the same principle in very clear terms :

> O ye men ! surely We have created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families that you may know each other.[5]

> And We created you in pairs.[6]

> And that He it is Who created (you) in pairs, the male and the female, from the small life-germ when it is transmitted (into the womb) [7]

> Then He made of him two kinds, the male and the female.[8]

> And Allah created you of dust, then of the life-germ then He made you (in) pairs.[9]

> And among His signs is this : that He created for you mates from among yourselves.[10]

The Law of Procreation is made still clear in the following verse:

> And God makes for you mates from among your ownselves and through your mates He gives you sons and grandsons.[11]

This verse, and also the one I will next quote, refers to the wonderful mystery of sex. Children are born of the union of sexes. And it is always the female sex that brings forth the offspring, whether male or female. And the father is as necessary as the mother for bringing forth children. This is explained thus :

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XIII : 3.
2 *Ibid.*, XX : 53. (Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar). XXXVI : 36.
3 *Ibid.*, XXXV : 28.
4 *Ibid.*, XLII : 11.
5 *Ibid.*, XLIX : 13.
6 *Ibid.*, LXXVIII : 8.
7 *Ibid.*, LIII : 45-46.
8 *Ibid.*, LXXV : 39.
9 *Ibid.*, XXXV : 11.
10 *Ibid.*, XXX : 21. See also IV : 1.
11 *Ibid.*, XVI : 72. Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar.

And it is He Who has brought you into being from a single kind, then there is *a resting place* and *a depository*: indeed We have made plain the communications for a people who understand.[1]

This verse refers to our creation from a *single kind*. The word used is *nafs*; which means a soul, or a thing, or an essence, or a kind. The learned authors of *Taj-al-Arus*, *Tafsir-i-Kabir* and *Bahr-ul-Muhit* explain this word as signifying *min jinsehi*: of the same kind. The Arabic words which have been translated as *a resting place* and *a depository* in the verse are *Mustaqirr* and *Mustauda'* respectively. The *Imam* Asir-ud-Din Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yusuf bin Ali Abu Hayyan who flourished (654—754 A.H.) in Cordova, in Spain, explains in his well-known commentary, *Bahr-ul-Muhit*, that these words respectively mean *the loins of the father* and *the womb of the mother*,[2] and thus these words really stand for a male and a female.

It is evident, therefore, that according to the Holy Qur-'an no procreation is possible without male and female agencies. The Holy Qur-'an lays so much stress on this Law of Procreation that it advances this very Law as an argument to refute the Divine sonship of Jesus:

And they falsely attribute to Him sons and daughters without knowledge; Glory be to Him, and highly exalted is He above what they ascribe (to Him.) Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth. *How could He have a son when He has no consort*, and (He) Himself created everything and He is the Knower of all things.[3]

Again:

And that He—exalted be the Majesty of our Lord—has not taken a consort, nor a son.[4]

The Holy Qur-'an does not leave the matter there. It refers to the uniting of the male and the female, to the intermingling of the male spermatozoon with the female ovum—neither of which can be fertilised without the other. The Book then refers to the development of this admixture in the womb. In the following verses the word *nutfa* has been translated as *life-germ*, but it really signifies, the male sperm. Says the Holy Qur-'an:

Does not man see that We have created him from a small life-germ.[5]

Was he not a small life-germ in the seminal elements, then he was a clot of blood so He created (him), then made (him) perfect.[6]

Further, the Holy Qur-'an also makes it clear that in the creation of men the male agency plays a far more important part than the female:

1 The Holy Qur-'an, VI: 99.

2 Abu Hayyan, *Bahr-ul Muhit*, Vol. IV: 188.

3 The Holy Qur-'an, VI: 101-102.

4 *Ibid.*, LXXII: 3.

5 *Ibid.*, XXXVI: 77.

6 *Ibid.*, LXXV: 37-38.

And that He created (you) in pairs, the male and the female from the small life-germ when it is transmitted (into the womb).[1]

Surely, We have created man out of the mixture of a (male and female) small life-germ uniting itself.[2]

Did We not create you from an insignificant water? Then We placed it in a secure resting place (womb) till an appointed time.[3]

Now let man think from what he is created : he is created from a drop emitted, proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.[4]

Thus, according to the Holy Qur-'an, the birth of man cannot take place without the uniting and interaction of a pair resulting in the intermixture of the male sperm and the female ovum. To place the matter beyond the remotest possibility of doubt, the Holy Qur-'an gives the elements from which and the numerous physical stages through which man is created. We read :

O people ! if you are in doubt about the raising, then surely We created you from dust then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh (sometimes) complete in making and (sometimes) incomplete, (in order) that We may make clear to you ; and We cause what We please to stay in the wombs till the appointed time, then We bring you forth as babies.[5]

In this verse God's creative work, so far as man is concerned, is stated. It explains that inorganic matter becomes organic and living matter ; the inorganic constituents of the earth having been absorbed into living matter by way of food, the living matter reproduces itself by means of *sperma genital* of the male sex. It is deposited in the ovum and fertilises it and rests for a time in security in the mother's womb. The first stage in the fertilised ovum is its conversion into a sort of clot of thickly congealed blood ; the zygote cells grow by segmentation : then the mass gradually assumes shape in its growth as a foetus. From the lump develop bones and flesh and organs and a nervous system. Then what is called by the Holy Qur-'an ; the *breathing of God's spirit* or *inspiration* into him takes place,[6] and, after the appointed time, the child is born. The subject is again recapitulated in the following words :

And certainly We created man of extract of clay, then We made a small life-germ in a firm resting place (womb), then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made this clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah the Best to create.[7]

Again :

1 The Holy Qur-'an, LIII : 45-46.
2 *Ibid.*, LXXVI : [illegible]
3 *Ibid.*, LXXVII : 20-22.
4 *Ibid.*, LXXXVI : [illegible] ; Translation, Yusuf Ali.
5 *Ibid.*, XXII : [illegible]
6 *Ibid.*, [illegible]
7 *Ibid.*, XXIII : 12-14

He it is Who created you of dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child 1

In another place the Holy Qur-'an explains, rather more precisely, how thé conception takes place :

He it is Who created you of a single kind and of the same (kind) did He make his mate, that he might incline to her ; *so when he covers her* she conceives a light burden, then moves about with it, but when it grows heavy, they both call upon Allah, their Lord : if Thou givest us a good one (child), we shall certainly be of the grateful ones 2

The italicised words make it perfectly clear how conception takes place, to wit, the male agency must play its part. In the beginning the "burden" of the mother is light but with the quickening it becomes heavy. The birth of a child is fraught with hope as well as much suffering and unforeseen risk to the mother herself ; and it is explained that the parents in their anxiety turn to their Lord.

IV. All Human Beings Must Die

God has created man and ordained that death shall be his common lot Life on this planet without death has not been granted to any man. All human beings, according to the Holy Qur-'an, are mortals and must die and die on this earth. Says the Holy Qur-'an :

Every soul shall taste of death.3

He (also) said (to man) therein (on earth) you shall live and therein shall you die.4

And We did not ordain abiding for any mortals before thee 5

And He it is Who has brought you to life, then He will cause you to die 6

And He it is Who multiplied you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered.7

Every one in it (earth) must pass away.8

Have you considered the life-germ? Is it you that create it or are We the Creator? We have ordained death among you and We are not to be overcome.9

Of what thing did He create him (man)? Of a small life-germ He created him ; then He empowered him, then as for the way He has made it easy (for him), then He causes him to die, then assigns to him a grave.10

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XL : 67. see also XXXV : 11.
2 *Ibid.*, VII : 189.
3 *Ibid.*, III : 184. See also XXI : 35. The word *nafs* in both these verses stands for man.
4 *Ibid.*, VII : 25.
5 *Ibid.*, XXI : 34.
6 *Ibid.*, XXII : 66.
7 *Ibid.*, XXIII : 79.
8 *Ibid.*, LV : 26.
9 *Ibid.*, LVI : 58-60.
10 *Ibid.*, LXXX : 18-21.

And finally :

> And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting place (womb), then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation ; so blessed be Allah the Best to create. Then after that you will most certainly die.[1]

In contrast with the life of man which must come to an end on this earth the Holy Qur-'an points out that God alone is "Ever-living, Who dies not."[2]

Laws of God are Immutable

I have so far set out various Laws of God mentioned in the Holy Qur-'an which are relevant to the subject under discussion. Does the Holy Qur-'an contemplate any exception to or change in any of these laws? In most emphatic terms the Book itself gives the answer in the negative.

If we look to nature itself we find that the Laws of God are fixed and we do not find any change in its course. On the contrary, a wonderful regularity and uniformity is disclosed all through the universe. To use the words of the Holy Qur-'an, we find that each one of the creations of God pursues its course to an appointed time.[3] There is no chaos, no disorder, no incongruity. It is obvious that things belonging to the entire creation are subject to, and must follow, the same Laws. It has been well said that our human will may falter or turn away from its course, but God's Will ever follows its course and cannot be turned away by any cause whatever. In fact this uniformity points to the One Universal Designer, Fashioner and Creator Whose Will is exercised according to, and becomes manifest in, His Laws. Consistency is His Will and His Will is the Law itself and a law unto itself. Says the Holy Qur-'an:

> Then set your face upright for religion in the right state the nature made by Allah in which He made men: there is no altering of Allah's creation, that is the right religion; but most people do not know.[4]

Again :

> You see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God : then look again, can you see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again and again : your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued.[5]

The immutability of the Laws of God is stressed over and over again in the Holy Qur-'an.

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XXIII : 12-15.

2 *Ibid.*, XXV : 58.

3 *Ibid.*, XIII : 2.

4 *Ibid.*, XXX : 30.

5 *Ibid.*, LXVII : 3-4.

And you shall not find a change in Our course.[1]

And you shall not find any change in the course of Allah.[2]

And you shall not find a change in Allah's course.[3]

For you shall not find any alteration in the course of Allah; and you shall not find any change in the course of Allah.[4]

If we apply the foregoing basic principles of the Holy Qur-'an to Jesus, we are forced to believe that he was a human being, a mortal, a servant, a Messenger, a Prophet of God, and *a fortiori* he must have been conceived, born and have died on this earth in the normal and usual way. No change in the Laws of God can even be contemplated, much less considered, unless the contrary is stated, in the Holy Qur-'an itself, in very clear and unambiguous terms. It is urged that God Almighty being All-Powerful could have changed His Laws and could have caused the birth of Jesus to be immaculate and He could have spared him an earthly physical death.

I do not for a single moment hesitate to concede this proposition. Undoubtedly God could have done all this, and much more, even beyond our comprehension. To urge otherwise, I frankly admit, would be a sin. But this is really begging the question. Did He do it? Did He violate any of His own Laws? The theories of the immaculate birth and Ascension of Jesus cannot be proved on this theoretical hypothesis. It must be established from the Holy Qur-'an itself that God, having admittedly the absolute unfettered power to do so, did actually do these things or cause these things to happen. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan while discussing this question rightly points out that miracles were wrought to establish the claims of a Prophet of God, and, therefore, miracles before the stage of prophethood, as the immaculate birth of Jesus, would not only be devoid of all significance but they would also fail to achieve the desired result.[5]

I will now discuss the question of the birth of Jesus in the light of the Holy Qur-'an. I have already mentioned that the Christian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus do not form an integral part of the faith of a Muslim.

It cannot too often be repeated that the Holy Qur-'an is not a book of history. Its object is not to narrate history as such. It merely mentions certain features and events of the lives of the Prophets of God which can serve as a guidance and warning to us. With the same object the Book also speaks of the various

1 The Holy Qur-'an XVII : 77.
2 *Ibid.*, XXXIII : 62.
3 *Ibid.*, XLVIII : 23.
4 *Ibid.*, XXXV : 43.
5 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan: *Khutabat-i-Ahmadiyya*, Vol. II : 24.

tribes and nations to whom these Prophets were sent.[1] The main object of these references in the Holy Qur-'an is to affirm, modify or contradict the then existing beliefs about these Prophets of God.

Jesus is mentioned in the Holy Qur-'an about thirty times, and certain features of his life are given at some length in Chapters III and XIX. Chapter XIX is in fact an earlier revelation. At the time of the Holy Prophet two divergent views about Jesus were prevalent among Christians and Jews :

Christian Belief	*Jewish View*
1. Immaculate Conception.	1. Illegitimate Birth.
2. Jesus was the son of God.	2. Jesus was a false prophet and the progeny of the devil.
3. Jesus was disrespectful to his mother.	3 Mary had disowned Jesus.
4. Jesus died on the cross, resurrected from the dead and ascended to heaven.	4. Jesus was crucified and died the death of an accursed of God.

It need hardly be mentioned that, according to the Holy Qur-'an, both these contradictory views were erroneous and without justification or foundation. It was, therefore, essential for the Holy Qur-'an to expose their falsity and refute these baseless charges and calumnies which had been levelled against Jesus and his mother, Mary, and thus clear their characters and finally to assert and re-establish the humanity of Jesus.

It is convenient here to discuss very briefly the relations of Jesus with his mother and to describe her character from the Qur-'anic point of view. Jesus, we are told, was dutiful to his mother and was not insolent to her.[2] Mary is described as a human being, who ate and drank; and as a truthful woman.[3] She had faith in God,[4] and was a chosen one of God.[5] She was an obedient servant of God who guarded her chastity.[6] Thus the character of Mary, as given in the Holy Qur-'an, is quite contrary to the one depicted by Christians or Jews. The Holy Qur-'an declares in most emphatic terms that the charges made against her were false.

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XVII : 41; XXI : 113.

2 *Ibid.*, XIX : 32. Matthew (XII : 48) relates an incident which shows that Jesus was rude to his mother. The Holy Qur-'an refutes this allegation.

3 *Ibid.*, V : 75.

4 *Ibid.*, III : 36.

5 *Ibid.*, III : 41.

6 *Ibid.*, LXVI : 12.

In dealing with the birth of Jesus we must, as I have already pointed out, turn to chapter XIX and chapter III. These two chapters in fact contain two parallel descriptions of the birth and mission of Jesus, and do not narrate two separate events.[1]

The narrative begins in chapter XIX with a reference to John the Baptist, while in chapter III it mentions first the mother of Mary, Hanna.[2] Then it introduces John the Baptist and subsequently continues with some events of the life of Jesus. I will, however, deal with the two incidents separately.

Zacharias, we are told, prayed to God for a son, who might receive and carry on his inheritance and the inheritance of the children of Jacob, and that this son might be one in whom the Lord might be well pleased.[3] The object of this prayer was that there should be someone in the family who might continue to serve God and carry on the work of reformation of the posterity of Jacob. And indeed this was the inheritance to which Zacharias had referred. His prayer was heard and as he stood praying in the sanctuary he had an apparition: an angel appeared to him and conveyed the good news that Yahya (John) would be born to him.[4] But Zacharias wondered:

> My Lord: whence shall there be a son born to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren?[5]

But the angel said:

> *So shall it be.* Thy Lord says: It is easy for Me, and indeed I created thee before when thou wert nothing.[6]

Thereafter God cured the wife of Zacharias and made her fit,[7] and she gave birth to John.

Regarding the birth of Mary, we learn that on becoming pregnant her mother Hanna:

> a woman of (the tribe of) Imran[8] said, My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); accept therefore from me, surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing.[9]

1 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan lays great stress on the point and concludes from it that Mary had but one apparition (*Khutabat-i-Ahmadiyya*, Vol. II : 34).

2 The Holy Qur-'an does not give the name of the mother of Mary. Her name was Hanna (see *Tafsir Ibn-Jarir*, Vol. III : 144). I will throughout this discussion refer to her by this name, though I will refrain, for obvious reasons, from introducing her name into the Qur-'anic text.

3 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 6; III : 37.

4 *Ibid.*, XIX : 7; III : 38.

5 *Ibid.*, XIX : 8; III : 39.

6 *Ibid.*, XIX : 9; III : 39.

7 *Ibid.*, XXI : 90.

8 *Cf.* Luke, I : 5 and I : 36, Moses had anointed Aaron in accordance with the commands of the Lord (Lev., VIII : 2), and in Ch. XI of the Book of Moses called Leviticus it is laid down that the sons of Aaron shall be the priests of the Lord. The reference to the tribe of Aaron in this verse merely indicates that Hanna, the mother of Mary, belonged to the priestly tribe of Aaron.

9 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 36. A parallel of this prayer is also to be found in the case of another Hanna in I Sam., I : 11.

Hanna, therefore, vowed that her child, and she expected a son, should be devoted to the service of the temple for life,[1] or in other words become a priest.

Among the Israel of old a vow, an obligation to God, a pledge to do a thing, was undertaken voluntarily to secure Divine aid. It was of a very binding character and its breach was thought to entail tragic consequences; any evasion or subterfuge was, therefore, sternly censured and suppressed. These vows are fully dealt with in the Mosaic dispensation.[2]

By way of illustration, I may mention here the case of the *vestal virgins*. In those days, under the Roman Law, only two classes of people could enter the vestibule next to the sanctuary or the sanctuary of the Roman temples—priests or vestal virgins. These vestal virgins had to take oaths of celibacy and were considered to be under the *patria potestas* of the King, who exercised his control over them through the priests. Vestal virgins were treated with the marks of respect usually accorded to royalty: thus in the streets they were preceded by a lictor and they were above the law. The functions of the vestal virgins consisted of simple household duties. They looked after the temple fire, received offerings from worshippers, mopped the floors and baked cakes of meal.[3] They also fetched water.[4] The Jews under the Roman influence, and even before that, had female attendants in their temples. Thus in the *Book of Maccabees* we read that when Heliodorus came to take away the treasures of the temple, the virgins came out of their retirement in the sanctuary, some appeared in the streets, some at the windows and others upon the walls of the temple.[5] But inasmuch as it was deemed to be a sin for a Jew or a Jewess to remain unmarried throughout his or her life, it being their sacred duty to raise children for Israel, the priests did marry and Jewish "vestal virgins" also married on attaining puberty.

The priests, however, continued to function as such even after their marriage, of course, subject to certain laws of purification.[6]

But the case of the female attendants was different They had, on attaining puberty, to leave the sanctuary irrespective of the fact whether they got married or not. The reason is not far to seek. Jews considered every woman to be unclean during her

1 *Tafsir Ibn-i-Jarir*, Vol. III : 144.

2 Lev., XXVII : 1-29. Nu., XXX : 1-15.

3 Sir James George Frazer, *Garnered Sheaves*, 60-61.

4 Gen., XXIV : 43 speaks of virgins drawing water.

5 2. Macc., III : 19.

6 Lev., XV : 6-17.

periods of "issues" including menstruation. Likewise a woman was deemed to be unclean after childbirth.[1] Not only this :

> Every bed whereon she lieth . . . and whatsoever she sitteth on shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean.[2]

And further, in such circumstances "the days of the separation for her infirmity" during which she was deemed to be "unclean" were seven after "the issues"[3] and in the case of childbirth it was extended to thirty-three and sixty-six days according to the sex of the child,[4] the longer period being for a female.

The idea underlying these prohibitions was that the sanctuary of the Lord should not be defiled. It is true that the word sanctuary has been used to describe that part of the temple which was the most sacred place, the Holy of Holies, in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept and where none but the high priest could enter once in a year; but it is also used generally for the temple itself[5] and also for the place appointed for the public worship of the Lord, where the worshippers brought their offerings to the Lord.[6]

In most cases the departure of Jewish "vestal virgins" from the temple synchronized with their marriages, because a husband alone could relieve the devotee of her vows :

> And if she be married to a husband while the vows are upon her if her husband disallowed her on the day he heard it, then he shall make her vow of none effect.[7]

To continue, Hanna having vowed to dedicate her child to the temple for life was disappointed when she realized that she had given birth to a daughter.[8]

> So when she brought it forth, she said : My Lord ! surely I have brought forth a female—and Allah knew best what she had brought forth and the male is not like the female—and I have named her Mary, and I commend her and *her offspring* into Thy protection from the accursed devil.[9]

This incident must have taken place when Mary was a few days old, for she is mentioned by name. The fact that Hanna had given birth to a daughter did not deter her from fulfilling her vow, and she here commends Mary and *her offspring* to the protection of God. It is obvious therefore, that Hanna knew that as a girl Mary could remain in the Temple only for a limited period, and she also knew that after that period Mary would have

1 Lev., XII : 4 ; XV : 18-28.
2 *Ibid.*, XV : 26-27.
3 *Ibid.*, XV : 28.
4 *Ibid.*, XII : 2-5.
5 2 Ch., XX : 8.
6 Ps., LXXIII : 77.
7 Nu., XXX : 6-8, R.V. p. 202.
8 This is a parenthetical (*jumla mu'tariza*) statement.
9 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 35.

to marry according to Jewish traditions. That is why Hanna did not commend Mary alone to the Lord, but *her offspring* also.

Zacharias belonged to the priestly tribe of Abijah and, as a Prophet of God, was also the high priest. Now according to the New Testament, Zacharias was living at Bethabara,[1] on the eastern bank of the Jordon. This place, as traced by modern explorers, lies to the east of Nazareth,[2] the place to which the parents of Mary belonged. Zacharias' wife Elisabeth was a cousin of Mary.[3]

It is, therefore, but natural that Mary in her tender years, after the weaning period, should have been entrusted to the care of the spiritual head of the family, Zacharias. The Holy Qur-'an says :

> And mention Mary in the Book; when she drew aside from the family to an eastern place.[4]

The words an *eastern place* refer to a place in an eastern direction from her house.[5] In fact the reference is to the residence of Zacharias which was to the east of Nazareth. This is made clear in the following words :

> So her Lord accepted her (Mary) with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing and gave her into the charge of Zacharias.[6]

Without referring to any material details of her life at the temple,[7] the Holy Qur-'an suddenly introduces the next important event in her life in the very next verse :

> So she took a veil (to screen herself) from them.[8]

The word translated as *veil* is *hijab*. It also means cover, protection or seclusion. Among the Jews protection was granted by the parents to their daughters, by a sponsor to his ward, by a husband to his wife. Young unmarried women lived in apartments set apart for them which were not visited by men who

1 John, I : 28.
2 Peake, *Commentary on Bible*, 749.
3 Luke, I : 36.
4 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 16-17.
5 Shahab-ud-Din Abul Fazal Al-Sayed Mahmud-ul-Alusi Al-Baghdadi, *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*, Vol. V : 161.
6 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 36.
7 Some details are given in III : 36. We are told that whenever Zacharias entered the sanctuary he found food (the offering of worshippers) with Mary. Zacharias on seeing this food used to ask : "O Mary ! whence comes this to thee ?' And her natural reply was : "It is from Allah : surely Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure." This reply of Mary has been made the subject of a legend which finds support only in Christian sources to which I have already referred (*Ubi. Sup.*, p. 133) and which is nowhere supported by the Holy Qur-'an or any authentic saying of the Holy Prophet. Her relpy was in fact the reply of any devout person who believes that Allah is the Sustainer of all, and that all sustenance comes from Him. See *Tafsir-i-Kabir* where this point is made clear under this verse (Vol. II : 444-445). Abu Ali Al-Jabai states in his *Tafsir* that Zacharias used to question Mary as he, being her guardian, wanted to be certain that the person who had supplied Mary with food had no improper motives (Vol. II : 444).
8 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 17.

were strangers to the family or even by male relations beyond certain degrees; and when young women were obliged to go out, they were always veiled and never appeared uncovered. By way of illustration, the case of Amnon, the son of David, may be cited He conceived a violent passion for Tamar, but he could not even converse with her alone, because she was a virgin and lived in the innermost part of the palace. He had to deceive the King to get permission for Tamar to come out and see him.[1] The seclusion of young women is also referred to in the Psalms.

The Qur-'anic reference to Mary having taken a veil really indicates that she had secluded herself and left the temple building as she had attained the age of puberty.

This verse, therefore, merely points to her physical condition. We are then told that angels appeared to her and the conversation which took place between Mary and the angels is next recorded. I may mention here that verse 41, beginning with *wa iz qalat-al-malaikatu* (*and the angels said*) really describes the same event. Therefore, the second *iz qalat* is a continuation of the first *wa iz qalat* and what is contained in verses 42 and 43 is really parenthetical. Thus Zamakhshari, in his Commentary, while explaining the second *iz qalat*, says that it is explanatory of the first *wa iz qalat*, and goes on to observe that the second is a *badal* (substitution or standing in place) of the first. He puts a question to himself and answers it : "If you ask me with what is connected (the second) *iz qalat*: I say that it is a *badal* of (the first) *wa iz qalat*."[2] This is of particular importance as we must not read verse 43 as mentioning an event which had taken place before the facts mentioned in verse 44. They really follow them

I give the relevant portions of the conversation as contained in the two chapters :

(*Wa iz qalat-al-Malaikatu*) And when the angels said, surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and selected you as above the women of the world.[3] (*Iz qalat-al-Malaikatu*) When the angels said : O Mary ! surely Allah gives you good news with a word from Him (of one) whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and (he shall be) of those who are made near (to Allah).[4]

Then We sent her Our *inspiration* and it appeared there to her like a well made man.[5] . . . He said, I am only a messenger of Thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.[6]

This conversation, as well as that which follows between the angels and Mary really took place at a time when she had left the

1 Sam., XIII : 1-22.
2 Zamakhshari, *Tafsir Kashshaf Jarullah*, Vol. I : 305, see also *Tafsir-i-Baizawi*, Vol I : 9 of *Sura Al-i-Imran*.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 41.
4 *Ibid.*, III : 44.
5 *Ibid.*, XIX : 17.
6 *Ibid.*, XIX : 19. Translation by Yusuf Ali.

temple but was still under the guardianship of Zacharias, and at a time when the question of her second *kafalat* (marriage) was being decided. The sandwiching of this event (verse 43) in between the conversation can lead to no other conclusion. Further, the conversation was in a vision only. The word *tamassala* used in verse 17 of Chapter XIX gives the clue. It signifies *assuming the likeness of another thing.* I am supported in this by the well-known commentator Baizawi who describes the conversation in the verses of Chapter III as a revelation and says that it was not a direct talk.[1] Similarly, the conversation recorded in Chapter XIX was an apparition and not a direct talk.[2] Maulvi Abul Hassan Hossaini of Kakori, while commenting on these verses, says that the angels did not have direct talk with Mary and that the angels talked to her in a vision only.[3]

It is noteworthy that the appearance and talk was of *angels* and not of an angel. I draw attention to this fact because it has been alleged that Mary had conceived supernaturally, through the agency of this angel.

The reaction of Mary on receiving this news was somewhat similar to that of Zacharias. She also pleaded her physical difficulty. She said :

> Whence shall I have a boy, and no mortal has yet touched me nor have I been unchaste? He said, *so shall it be* ; your Lord says, It is easy for Me.4

This doubt of Mary is also expressed in Chapter III in the following terms :

> My Lord, whence shall there be a son (born) to me, and man has touched me not? He said : Even so (*so shall it be*). Allah creates what He pleases. When He has decreed a matter, He only says to it Be and it is 2

The word *Kazalik* (*so shall it be*) is used in two places in both the chapters. In Chapter XIX it is suffixed in both the verses : 9 and 21, with a small *jeem*. This indicates that the reader ought to pause here while reciting these verses. It is meant to convey that the sentence has been completed. This small *jeem* is inserted to avoid confusion or intermingling of the preceding words with those that follow. A mere ending of the verse here would not have made this idea prominent. It is for this reason alone that a small *jeem*, a "stop," was inserted. The insertion of this small *jeem* really indicates that the reply (*so shall it be*) is complete in itself, and the sentence which follows it, is only an elaboration of it. I will presently explain its significance.

I must now refer to Chapter XXI, entitled the *Prophets.* It is so called because it mentions the various Prophets and chosen of

1 *Tafsir-i-Baizawi*, Vol. I : 9 of *Sura Al-i-Imran.*
2 *Tafsir Ruh-al-Ma'ani*, Vol. V : 165
3 Abul Hassan Hossaini, *Ahwal-ul-Ambiya-fi-Tazkirat-ul Ashiya*, Vol. I : 700.
4 The Holy Qur-'an. XIX : 20-21. Translation by Yusuf Ali).
5 *Ibid.*, III : 46.

God who had made certain specific prayers under particular circumstances. The Holy Qur-'an explains in this chapter how their prayers had been granted. For example, we are told that when Abraham had prayed for a son, his wife was given the good news of the birth of Isaac and of a grandson Jacob, she had said :

> O, wonder ! shall I bring a son when I am an extremely old woman, and this my husband an extremely old man?[1]

In this chapter we are told that the prayer of Abraham having been heard, her defect was removed, and Isaac was born and then he begat Jacob.[2]

A little further on the prayer of Zacharias is mentioned. We are told :

> And (as to) Zacharias when he cried to his Lord : Leave me not alone (without offspring) and Thou art the Best of those who inherit. Then We responded to him and gave John and we cured his wife for him.[3]

Let me pause here and remark that according to the Holy Qur-'an the birth of Isaac and John was in no way super-natural. Thus the significance of the answer to Zacharias. "*Kazalik* (so shall it be) as it is easy for Me" does not imply that the physical obstacle mentioned by him had continued to subsist and that in spite of this obstacle John was born. *Kazalik* (so shall it be) was merely meant to convey that the physical obstacle did exist at the time of the conversation, but that it would subsequently be removed as this was an "easy matter" for God. Thus *Kazalik* (so shall it be) in fact indicates that a son would be born in the very manner in which Zacharias contemplated that the birth could take place, or in other words it was meant as a prophetic utterance that the obstacle referred to would be removed. The violation of any natural Law of God was not contemplated nor was a super-natural or immaculate birth foretold : for the way or the means adopted for granting the prayer of Zacharias are clearly indicated in this verse, to wit, *his wife was cured and made fit for him.*

The same phrase *Kazalik* (so shall it be), with a small *jeem* after it, is found in Verse 21 of Chapter XIX, and which deals with Mary. The commentator of *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani* gives four different meanings of the word *Kazalik*. Dealing with the third meaning, he says that it is a predicate and its subject is *al-amr* which is in fact *mahzuf* (omitted) in the text. With this subject he says the sentence would be *qala al amru Kazalik : And he said, so shall* (*like what you say*) *the matter be.* He further states that these words merely assert that the preceding sentences (the

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XI : 72.
2 *Ibid.*, XXI : 72.
3 *Ibid.*, XXI : 89-90. Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar. The same significance is given in *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani.*

obstacles mentioned by Zacharias and Mary) in themselves give the indication how the *matter* shall take place.[1]

Thus if we give the same meaning to *Kazalik* (*so shall it be*), to wit, that the physical obstacle mentioned by Mary did exist at that time but that it would be removed, the words *kazalik* (*so shall it be*) would signify that Mary was to give birth to a son in the very manner, through marriage, in which she knew a son could be born. That is why, while Mary talked in the *present* tense, the angels always spoke in the *future* tense.

The prayer of Hanna regarding Mary and *her offspring* had been granted.[2] We have, therefore, a right to expect that the Holy Qur-'an should explain how the obstacle mentioned by Mary had been removed. This explanation is again to be found in the chapter entitled : *The Prophets* (XXI). In this chapter we are told :

> And she (Mary) *who guarded her chastity*, so We breathed into her of Our inspiration and made her and her son a sign for the nations.[3]

In another place we find another similar passage :

> And Mary, daughter of Aaron, *who guarded her chastity*, so We breathed into him of Our inspiration and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was of the obedient ones.[4]

The words *allati ahsanat farjaha*, which have been translated in both the verses as *who guarded her chastity*, furnish us with a key to the solution. *Farjaha* merely refers to pudendum. The word *ahsanat* is derived from the root *hasan* meaning a fortress; it also means a virtuous, a chaste or a *married woman*.[5] As a verb *ahsanat* would mean : she was or became continent or chaste, or she abstained from what was unlawful, or indecorous.[6] Lane, on the authority of the *Mughrib* of El-Mutarrizee, the *Misbah* of El-Feiyoomee, the *Sihah* and the *Qamoos* says that *ahsanat* also means "she became married or she had a husband."[7]

The *Lughat-i-Kishori* also gives the same meaning.[8] The *Lisan-ul-Arab* also states *ahsanat imra'at* means that the woman got married or passed into the protection of her husband.[9] In *Taj-ul-'Arus* under the word *hasan* the learned author, while dealing with the very words of the Holy Qur-'an which occur in these two verses : *allati ahsanat farjaha*, says :

1 *Tafsir Ruh-al-Ma'ani*, Vol. I : 547.

2 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 36.

3 *Ibid.*, XXI : 91.

4 *Ibid.*, LXVI : 12.

5 *Lughat-i-Kishori*, 154.

6 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. I : 586.

7 *Ibid.*, I : 586.

8 *Lughat-i-Kishori*, 154.

9 *Lisan-ul-Arab*, Vol. XVI : 276.

> In the *Qur-'an-i-Majid* there occurs *allati ahsanat farjaha* : such a woman can be called a chaste woman or a married woman but the real meanings are a continent and *a pregnant woman* because pregnancy protects her from a man going into her.[1]

Lane also explains that *allati ahsanat farjaha* means a woman who guarded her pudendum from that which was unlawful or indecorous or one who "*protected her pudendum by marriage*."[2]

In the Holy Qur-'an itself the word, *Muhsanat*, which is derived from the same root, has been used for married women.[3]

Thus by using the word *allati ahsanat farjaha* the Holy Qur-'an clearly conveys that Mary was married subsequently and had *offspring* as prayed for by Hanna, her mother, and thus her prayer was granted.

But apart from the meaning of these words, there is in the Holy Qur-'an another reference to the marriage of Mary. We read :

> This is of the announcements relating to the unseen, which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Mary *in his charge*, and you were not with them when they contended one with the other.[4]

The word *yakfulu* which is translated as *should have in his charge* is derived from *kafeel* which means a person who makes himself responsible for another.[5] Now Mary, according to the Holy Qur-'an, had already been given "into the charge of Zacharias."[6] The question, therefore, of another person being put "in charge" of Mary could not have arisen during his life-time. But the Holy Qur-'an mentions this second *kifala't* apart from and independent of the guardianship of Zacharias. We know otherwise also that this question did arise a second time while he was alive.[7] Besides, there must be some reason for her to leave the temple and for Zacharias to have given up her charge. Zacharias as a high priest could not leave the temple,[8] but Mary on account of her puberty had to leave the place.[9] Her parents had died and she had no other relations. It was for these reasons that another person, who should be responsible for her, had to be found. I again refer to the author of the *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani* While commenting on this very verse and discussing the question : whether lots were drawn at the time of Mary's childhood or when she had grown up, he says :

1 *Taj-ul-'Arus*, Vol. IX : 179.
2 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol., I : 586.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, IV : 24.
4 *Ibid.*, III : 43.
5 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol., VII : 3001.
6 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 36.
7 *Ubi. Sup.*, p. 134.
8 Lev., XXI : 12.
9 The Gospel of Mary, see Yrjo Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*, 137, 201. See also *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*, Vol. I : 581.

The lots were drawn at the time of her puberty and because (for this reason) Zacharias had been rendered helpless and could not be her guardian (any longer)[1]

And, why should so many people have "contended one with the other?" The mere fact that a Divine oracle (casting of pens or rods) had to be resorted to indicates that the occasion was a solemn and religious one.[2] I have already stated that Zacharias himself sent for the bachelors of Israel in the locality and they all contended one with the other[3] for her hand in marriage as her father was a rich man[4] and her parents had died.

Zacharias had to draw lots by invoking the Divine oracle in the usual prescribed manner by means of pens[5] in or near the river Jordan and the Divine oracle pointed to Joseph, the carpenter, as the only suitable person who should be given of her charge. She was, therefore, married to him. Abu Jafar Muhammad Ibn-i-Jarir At-Tabari[6] while commenting on this very verse, says that with the passing of time Zacharias had to give up charge of Mary. He consequently sent for the children of Israel and invited them to take over charge of her. Lots had to be drawn. "The lot pointed to one of them who was a carpenter. . . . . The charge of Mary was entrusted to him. From hence onwards he used to provide her with sustenance and she lived with him."[7] Ibn-i-Jarir cites Muhammad bin Ishaq, one of the most authentic narrators of *Hadis*, as his authority for these facts.

I now quote once again the same verse :

And she (Mary) who guarded her chastity (by marriage), so We breathed into her of Our *inspiration* and made her and her son a sign for the nations.[8]

With this interpretation, the next incident narrated in the Holy Qur-'an, which deals with her pregnancy, becomes very clear :

So she conceived him; then removed herself with him to a remote place.[9]

Let me quote here a saying of Imam Wahab Ibn-Munabba which is quoted both by Imam Saalabi in his world-famous Commentary the *Arais* and also by Imam Shahab-ud-Din Abu Fazal Al-Syed Mahmud-ul-Alusi Al-Baghdadi in his *Tafsir-i-Ruh-ul-Ma'ani* :

1 *Ubi. Sup.* p. 134.
2 Hos., IV : 12. See also Isa., XI : 1.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 43.
4 *Tafsir-i-Kabir*, Vol. II : 453.
5 There were different methods of casting lots : by the sacred rods (Hos., IV : 12) by arrows (Ezek., XXI : 21). The pens here may stand for rods (or reeds) or arrows.
6 *Tafsir Ibn-i-Jarir, At-Tabri*, Vol. III : 149.
7 *Ibid.*, Vol. III : 152.
8 The Holy Qur-'an, XXI : 91.
9 *Ibid.*, XIX : 22.

> When Mary became pregnant her cousin (uncle's son) called Joseph, the carpenter, was with her and they both left for a temple towards Mount Tabor and they were both pious and he was the first to know of her pregnancy and he had not been separated from her for a minute.[1]

The saying of Imam Wahab Ibn-i-Munabba clearly indicates the relationship of Joseph and Mary to be that of a husband and wife.

The word "conceived" in Arabic is *hamalat*. I have already explained how according to the Holy Qur-'an a conception takes place :

> He it is Who created you of a single kind, and of the same (kind) did He make his mate, that he might incline to her; so when he *covers her*, she conceives a light burden.[2]

The marriage of Mary and the conception of Jesus thus took place at or near the residence of Zacharias. She had to stay there for some short time as she was charged with the completion of the Dividing Veil,[3] during which time Joseph took a vow of separation.[4] Thereafter she left with Joseph for his village Bethlehem en Nasoriyah in Galilee, "a remote place" from Bethabara.

As the time of delivery approached it was but natural that in keeping with Oriental traditions, Mary should return to Elisabeth her cousin. She had to pass on her way through her own town Nazareth. I have already mentioned that Jesus was born at Nazareth and not at Bethlehem-Judah, as Christians would have us believe. It is obvious, therefore, that her labour must have started as she reached that place. She was but human and suffered the pangs of an expectant mother. She had nowhere to go and must have taken refuge in the grounds of a temple on the hill. The Book says :

> And the throes (of child-birth) compelled her to betake herself to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said : Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten ! Then (a voice) called out to her : Grieve not, surely your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you. And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates. So eat and drink and refresh the eye.[5]

The palm-tree stands for food as it was the chief source in that country of sustenance for life.[6]

In those days in Palestine temples were usually built on hills, and Nazareth was in the time of Jesus on a hill These temples had palm-trees and springs in their grounds Thus we read in Ezekiel of a stream flowing out of God's sanctuary.[7]

1 *Tafsir-i Ruh al Ma'ani*, Vol. V : 69. The name of the mountain is given as *Jabal Sahun* : which stands for Mt. Tabor. For going to Bethlehem in Galilee from Bethabara they had to cross Mt. Tabor.
2 The Holy Qur-'an, VII : 189.
3 *Prot. Jac.*, XIII : 1 ; *cf.* Ex. XXVI : 31.
4 *The Gospel of Mary*. See Yrjo Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*, [illegible]
5 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 23-26.
6 *Cf.* Jd., IV : 5.
7 Ezek., XLVII : 1-2, see also Nu., XIX : 1-12.

These references really indicate that Mary at the time of the birth of Jesus needed sustenance and her husband was comforting her.

These verses are most significant. The utterance of Mary is incompatible with the Virgin Birth theory. Every mother who conceives in the ordinary way is ordained to bring forth her children in sorrow.[1] The reference to the throes of child-birth clearly establish that an ordinary human child was coming into the world and that no extraordinary circumstances attended the birth of Jesus. If the conception was immaculate the delivery ought to have been without "sorrow." Besides, if, to her knowledge, the conception was without male agency, and without her volition, her anguish and regrets become incompatible with her character as portrayed in the Holy Qur-'an. Why should she have given vent to such feelings and have wished that she were dead? No, in her moment of extreme trial, she felt like any ordinary human being.

And here ends the Qur-'anic version of the birth of Jesus. Thus according to the Holy Qur-'an Jesus was born of a woman like any other human child.

Christian critics of Islam raise various objections and try to justify their foolish dogmas by wrongly interpreting certain verses by attaching special meaning to the words of the Holy Qur-'an. I will now deal with these objections.

I. Jesus has been described in the Holy Qur-'an as a *Kalimah* (word) of God and a *Ruh*, inspiration, revelation or spirit of God and as a sign of God into whom the spirit of God was breathed. It is, therefore, urged that Jesus had no father.

The relevant verses are :

O, followers of the Book : do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only an apostle of Allah and His *word* which He communicated to Mary and an *inspiration* from Him.[2]

The Arabic words are *Kalimah* and *Ruh*. *Kalimah*, a word from Allah, stands for a prophecy of God; and Jesus was born in accordance with a prophecy from God to Mary. This word is frequently used in the Holy Qur-'an to mean a prophecy. Thus the promise given to Zacharias was "*a word* from Allah,"[3] and John was the verifier of that *word* because his birth brought about the fulfilment of that prophecy. A comparison with another verse makes the position perfectly clear :

And Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into him of our *inspiration* and she accepted the truth of the *words* of her Lord and His books, and she was of the obedient ones.[4]

1 Gen., III : 16.
2 The Holy Qur-'an, IV : 171. See also XIX : 17 : XXI: 91.
3 *Ibid.*, III : 38.
4 *Ibid.*, LXVI : 12. See also III : 44.

Speaking of Mary the Book says that "she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord." Thus Mary is here the verifier and not Jesus. The only meaning that can be given to the word *Kalimah* in the verse is the prophetic *words* of her Lord, *i.e.*, the Divine inspiration which she received from God relating to the birth of Jesus. It is noteworthy that the *inspiration* is breathed into *him*, *i.e.*, Jesus.

The Holy Qur-'an in numerous places speaks of the *word* of Allah to indicate Divine revelation, and the context in those places shows that Divine prophecies are meant.[1] Further, all creatures have been declared to be *words* of Allah.[2]

Jesus was spoken as a "sign" of God as in the case of his birth a difficulty had to be removed. But even so, all Prophets of God have been spoken of as "signs" of God because they, like Jesus, bring with them Divine arguments and revelation.[3] The creation of the heavens and the earth,[4] the creation of night and day[5] and the creation of man himself[6] have been described as "signs" of God.

I have already explained that the Book speaks of *Divine inspiration* or spirit having been breathed into *him*.[7] Evidently the word *him* cannot refer to Mary and this personal pronoun has been taken by commentators like Imam Fakhruddin Razi to refer to Jesus.[8] Therefore the verse means that Mary gave birth to Jesus who received Divine inspiration. It would make no difference if the word *Ruh* is taken to mean *spirit* for we are told that the spirit of God is breathed into every man:

> Who made good everything that He has created, and He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in light estimation. Then He made him complete and *breathed into him of His spirit*, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little it is that you give thanks.[9]

Again speaking of the creation of man the Book says:

> And when your Lord said to the angels: surely I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape. So when I have made him complete and *breathed into him of My spirit*, fall down making obeisance to him.[10]

These verses indicate that man is made complete only when Divine *inspiration* or *spirit* is breathed into him. Thus if Divine spirit was breathed into Jesus, it does not prove that he was born

1 The Holy Qur-'an, VI : 34, 116 ; X : 64.
2 *Ibid.*, XVIII : 109.
3 *Ibid.*, II : [illegible].
4 *Ibid.*, II : [illegible].
5 *Ibid.*, III : [illegible].
6 *Ibid.*, XXX : [illegible].
7 *Ibid.*, LXVI : 12.
8 *Tafsir Kabir*, Vol. VIII : 176.
9 The Holy Qur-'an, XXXII : 7-9.
10 *Ibid.*, XV : 28-29. See also XXXVIII : 71-72.

without a father. In fact Lane says that *breathing of spirit* signifies *quickening with spirit.*[1] In dealing with the relevant verses regarding breathing of spirit into Jesus, Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Razi attaches this very significance to these words.[2] But the real interpretation is inspiration, for Divine revelation has been called *Ruh*[3] and the Holy Qur-'an itself has also been named as such.[4] The Holy Qur-'an also refers to Jesus being strengthened by *Ruh-ul-Qudus*,[5] but it is not a special attendant of Jesus for the faithful followers of the Holy Prophet were all strengthened and attended by the Divine spirit[6] and we have on record that the Holy Prophet addressing Hasan bin Sabit said :

And Ruh-ul-Qudus is with You.

II. The Holy Qur-'an does not mention the name of the father of Jesus.

I have already stated that the Holy Qur-'an is not a book of history. There was no necessity for Joseph's name to have been mentioned. The name of Zacharias' wife is omitted. There are other Prophets of God, Moses for instance, whose fathers' names have not been mentioned. The name of the father of the Holy Prophet is not mentioned.

The reference to Jesus as son of Mary was really to indicate : firstly, that Mary was a chosen one of God and thus her character was cleared of the allegations made against her : and secondly, to indicate that Jesus was born of a woman. This in itself established that Jesus was neither God, nor son of God, for one born of a woman can never be God.[7] There was yet another reason. For purposes of identification, the Jews used to couple a man's name with that of his father. But in this case they were faced with a difficulty. *Joshuah* (Jesus) was a very common name among the Jews and so was Yusuf (Joseph). Thus *Joshuah ben Yusuf*—Jesus, son of Joseph—would have failed to achieve the desired result. I give but one instance. Barnabas who is mentioned by Pilate in the trial proceedings was also named Jesus.[8] The name of his father was also Joseph, the Teacher. To avoid confusion, Pilate referred to him as Barnabas (son of a teacher). It is because of these peculiar circumstances that Renan in his *Life of Jesus* says :

1 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*..

2 The Holy Qur-'an, XXI : 91 and LXVI : 12. See Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Razi—*Tafsir-i-Kabir*, Vol. VI : 130 and Vol. VIII : 176.

3 The Holy Qur-'an, XVI : 2; XL : 15.

4 *Ibid.*, XLII : 52.

5 *Ibid.*, II : 87, 253.

6 *Ibid.*, LVIII : 22.

7 Job, XXV : 4.

8 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 716. See also Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, 772.

Joseph had died before his son had assumed any public position. Mary remained in a manner the head of the family and this explains why Jesus where it was desired to distinguish him from others of the same name, was most frequently called *Son of Mary*.[1]

I may mention that the *Fatimids* are called after *Hazrat* Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet, and not after her husband *Hazrat* Ali for similar reasons.

III. There is no mention in the Holy Qur-'an that Jesus had a father.

Those that urge this objection, really expose their ignorance of the Holy Qur-'an. The Book says:

> And this was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people; We exalt in dignity whom We please. Surely your Lord is Wise, Knowing
>
> And We gave him Isaac and Jacob, each did We guide, and Noah did We guide before and of his descendants, David and Solomon and Job, and Joseph and Moses, and Aaron, and thus do We reward those who do good (to others)
>
> And Zacharias and John and Jesus and Elias; every one was of the good;
>
> And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot and every one We made to excel (in) the world.
>
> And from among *their fathers* and *their descendants* and their brethren, and We chose them and guided them into the right way.[2]

Jesus, among other Prophets of God, is spoken of as a descendant of Abraham. Without a father he could not be styled as such. But this is not all. Some eighteen Prophets have been mentioned by name in these verses and *their fathers* are also mentioned. The last verse (88), which deals with their fathers must be taken "to refer back to all the four groups."[3] If Jesus according to the Holy Qur-'an had no father, his name ought not to have been included in any of these groups—for the Holy Qur-'an refers to the fathers of all the eighteen Prophets mentioned in these verses. It is contended that the word *Aba'him* means paternal grandfathers, and not fathers. This is incorrect, but in any case it would be to argue the ridiculous, for there can be no paternal grandfather without a father.

IV. The following verses of the Holy Qur-'an are relied upon to prove that Jesus had no father:

> Then with him (Jesus) she (Mary) came to her people *carrying him* (with her). They said: O Mary! surely thou hast brought a great evil. O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a bad man, nor was thy mother an unchaste (woman). Thereupon she *pointed towards him*. They said,

1 Renan, *Life of Jesus*, 42.

2 The Holy Qur-'an, VI: 84-88.

3 Yusuf Ali, *Translation and Commentary of the Holy Qur-an*, page 313, n. 207.

How can we speak to one who *was* a child in the cradle? He said: Surely I *am* the servant of God, He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I be, and He has ordered me prayer and (to give) alms (poor-rate) so long as I live, and (He has) made me good to my mother, and He has not made me *rebellious*, unhappy.[1]

It is urged that these verses, follow, as they do, the reference to the birth of Jesus, indicate that when Mary came to her people *carrying him* in her arms, they charged her with adultery because she had given birth to Jesus while she was unmarried. If such had been the case, it is surprising indeed that neither Mary nor Jesus refuted this charge. Besides, as a result of this accusation Mary should have been stoned to death. The fact that she was not, conclusively establishes that they had not charged her with adultery.

To begin with, the word *tahmilahu* (carrying him) does not mean "carrying him in her arms." It means "carrying him on an animal."[2] Lane relying on the *Misbah* of El Feiyoomee translates it as carrying or mounting him on a beast.[3] If we turn to the Holy Qur-'an itself, we find that the same word occurs twice in another place. Some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet wanted to join an expedition. They had neither horses nor camels to ride on and came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to provide them with some animals for that purpose. The Holy Prophet could not do so and the Book exonerated them from any responsibility:

Nor in those who when they came to you that you might *carry them* you said: I cannot find that on which to *carry you*.[4]

This verse does not mean that the Holy Prophet was to carry them in his arms, "but rather had to take them with him, carrying them on animals."

The verses in question really point to the fact that when Jesus entered Jerusalem he was riding on an ass;[5] and that Mary, with other women of Galilee, was with him.[6]

But the question whether Mary was carrying Jesus in her arms or on an animal can be conclusively settled if the period to which these verses refer can be determined. For this purpose we should compare these verses with verses 9 to 12 of the same chapter which deal with John. In both cases there is a gap of time, and it is evident that the Book does not mention all the details of the lives of John and Jesus. In verse 9 the news of John is conveyed. Verses 10 and 11 speak of certain instructions

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 27-32. Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar.
2 *Lisan-ul-Arab*, Vol. XIII : 135. See also *Taj-ul-Arus*, Vol. VII : 28.
3 Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. II : 647.
4 The Holy Qur-'an, IX : 92.
5 Matt., XXI : 7 ; Mark, XI : 7 ; Luke, XIX : 35.
6 Matt., XXVII : 55-57 ; Mark, XV : 41-40.
Luke, XXIII : 49 ; John, XIX : 25.

given to Zacharias, and in verse 12, all of a sudden the Holy Qur-'an, directs John to "take hold of the Book," thus indicating that in the meantime he had reached the age of prophethood. The same sequence is maintained in the case of Jesus. Verses 23 to 25 relate to the birth of Jesus, verse 26 contains directions to Mary which are somewhat similar to those which had been given to Zacharias, and verse 30 suddenly represents Jesus as saying: "He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet." Thus both verses 12 and 30 refer to a period when John and Jesus had respectively been made Prophets of God. Jesus could have stated: "He has made me Prophet" only when he had been entrusted with the mission, and he must have already reached the age of prophethood. In any case Jesus could not have been ordered to say his prayers soon after his birth. Even if it be conceded that every child prays to God irrespective of his age, can it be urged that a child could also have been enjoined to pay the poor-rate (alms)? To comply with this command he must have had some independent means of income or must have owned some property in his own name or right. That Jesus, during his ministry in Palestine, had funds is evident from the fact that he had appointed Judas Iscariot as treasurer, or as one who, in the words of John, "had the bag."[1] Further Jesus said: "(He has) made me good to my mother." How could he have been good to his mother if he was an infant? No child in that age can be of any help to himself, much less to his mother.

No, the incident mentioned in the Holy Qur-'an refers to a period when Jesus had already become a Prophet of God, and had in fact been entrusted with the mission. He was then over forty years,[2] or at least thirty years old as mentioned by Luke.[3] That is why Jesus referred to himself as a servant of God in the *present* tense. But throughout the remaining part of his speech he spoke in the *past* tense. It is for these reasons that Maulana Muhammad Ali in his Commentary[4] and also the learned author of *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*[5] state that the reference to Jesus as being "one who *was* a child in the cradle" related back to a past event and that Jesus was not a child in the cradle at the time when this conversation took place. It is therefore wrong to allege that Mary was carrying Jesus in her arms at that time.

The ministry of Jesus in Palestine, according to Matthew and Luke, lasted for one year. It was during this time that Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem and had a talk with the Scribes and Pharisees. He then realized the impossibility of any argument or reconciliation with these authoritative exponents and

1 John, XII : 6.
2 *Ubi. Sup.*, pp. 86-87.
3 Luke, III : 23.
4 Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Translation of the Holy Qur-'an*, p. 614, n. 1543.
5 *Tafsir Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*, Vol. V : 174.

leaders of Judaism. He was shocked at their shortcomings and wrongdoings and gave vent to his indignation. The violence of his language overreached all bounds, for he called them fools and blind hypocrites, serpents and vipers,[1] and described them as the children of the devil.[2] They, therefore, decided to try him and kill him.

The Sanhedrin under the Roman Law had the power to try all Jews, but it could not impose the capital sentence[3] and it had to be confirmed by Pilate. The offence they had charged Jesus with was:

> We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is an anointed king.[4]

In John the charge against Jesus is explained thus:

> Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.[5]

No doubt, the charge was so framed, on false allegations, as to give Pilate his jurisdiction to impose the capital sentence. The procedure laid down in the Talmud for establishing the guilt of an accused person required that he should be questioned first. If he did not plead to the charge or admit his guilt, two witnesses had to depose to his guilt. Jesus was accordingly questioned:

> The High priest then asked Jesus of his *disciples* and of his *doctrine*. Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why asketh thou me? *Ask them which heard me*, What I had said unto them: behold they knew what I said.[6]

It is obvious that his disciples were not present and the elders had to question Jesus about them and "his doctrine" but Jesus "held his peace"[7] and refused to plead to the charge. Then as was required by Law:

> The chief priests and all the council sought for witnesses against Jesus to put him to death and found none.[8]

The high priest and the elders then tried to persuade the blind man, whom Jesus had cured, to testify against him. They asked him:

> What sayest thou of him: that he hath opened thine eyes? He said: *He is a prophet*.[9]

1 Matt., XXIII : 15 ; 33.
2 John, VIII : 44.
3 John, XVIII : 31.
4 Luke, XXIII : 2 : R. V. p 1163 discloses another Christian forgery. The word *Christ* was inserted later on.
5 John, XIX : 12.
6 John, XVIII : 19-21.
7 Matt., XXVI : 63 : Mark, XIV : 61.
8 Mark, XIV : 55 *cf.* Matt., XXVI : 59.
9 John, IX : 17.

The blind man was thus of no help to them, and they next questioned his parents,[1] but they also would not, or could not, give the desired testimony. In the absence of the other disciples of Jesus, who had all fled,[2] they questioned Peter, through three different persons. Peter not only denied on oath his connections with Jesus but even cursed him.[3] All this took place, as required by Law, in the presence of Jesus :

And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter and Peter went out and wept bitterly.[4]

The only person left was Mary. Speaking of the atrocities of the Sanhedrin on this occasion, Dean Milman says that they maltreated all partisans of Jesus with the terrible threats of ex-communication, and the timid believers and his relatives including Mary, were put before this awful tribunal, and when questioned refrained from saying anything, lest their testimony should be used against Jesus; but they one and all referred it to Jesus himself for information.[5]

It is to this incident that the Holy Qur-'an next refers :

They said O Mary ! surely thou hast brought a great evil. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman.[6]

The mention of Mary as sister of Aaron had a far deeper significance. It was meant as an appeal to her high lineage, to her better sense of justice; for Aaron, whose descendant she was, had been the first in the line, the fountainhead of the Israelite priesthood : a saintly man bound by the Law. It was an appeal to Mary to do her duty, to uphold the Law and to support and side with the Pharisees who "sat in Moses' seat," even though her so doing would set her up against her own son. She was also reminded that she belonged to a noble family, the pride of Israel, and that her parents had also been virtuous and noble: and that, therefore, she was expected and ought to give the required testimony against the "great evil" which she had unwittingly brought into the world. They did not refer to Joseph intentionally. Firstly, because he was dead at that time,[7] and, secondly, even a mention of him would have by itself suggested a defence which would have disproved the charge of Jesus being a "King of the Jews," as Joseph was a "son of David"[8] and the Messiah, whom the Jews expected to be their king, redeemer and deliverer, had to be "born of the seed of the loins of David."

1 John, IX : 18-22.
2 Matt., XXVI : 56 : Mark, XIV : 50.
3 Matt., XXVI : 70-74 ; Luke, XXII : 56-60.
4 Luke, XXII : 61-63.
5 Dean Milman, *History of Christianity*, 272.
6 The Holy Qur-'an, XIX : 27-28.
7 For the lamentations of Jesus at the death of his father Joseph, see *Ubi. Sup.*, p. 113.
8 Matt., I : 20.

The background of this form of address is purely Oriental. Jesus was spoken of as an "evil" because his deeds appeared to the Pharisees to be against the Law: it had nothing to do with the birth of Jesus.

Mary, however, quite naturally refused to answer and "pointed to him" for a reply. But the elders wanted her testimony. They had, only a short while before the trial, when Jesus was talking of Abraham, taunted him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old."[1] The elders, therefore, goaded her to speak and pointed out to her in the same Oriental strain that they could not speak in her presence to one who "*was* a child in the cradle." There was nothing extraordinary for the elders to speak of Jesus in these terms. It is noteworthy that they referred to him as one who *was* and not *is* "a child in the cradle." They had in their own Oriental way tried to appeal to Mary once again and had applied this phraseology, a subterfuge, to induce her to speak.

Jesus realized the awkward position in which his mother had been placed. He already knew that her refusal might expose her to maltreatment by the Sanhedrin. To spare her the ordeal and suffering, and to be true to the character of being "good to his mother," he decided to and did address the elders himself. This address was both a memorable speech and a masterpiece of advocacy."[2] It is this address of Jesus which is reproduced in the Holy Qur-'an in the verses under discussion.[3] Had the question in issue been his legitimacy, or the conduct of Mary herself, Mary, and Mary alone, could have thrown light on it. In any case, Jesus ought to have referred to this matter in his reply. But he said nothing of the kind. The reply of Jesus becomes intelligible only if we consider it in the light of the charge which the Pharisees and elders had framed against him. They wanted to know of his "doctrine" and the charge was that he was a rebel against Cæsar as he claimed to be a "King of the Jews." Jesus, in his address explained his "doctrine" and then concluded it by refuting the specific charge. He said:

> Surely I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and, made me a Prophet. . . . He has not made me *rebellious*.[4]

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that Jesus was forty, at least thirty years old and his mission had already been entrusted to him when the incident mentioned in the Holy Qur-'an took place and that the only charge against him was that he had rebelled against Cæsar; and that the chastity of Mary or the birth of Jesus was not being challenged by the Jews. These verses of the Holy Qur-'an do not, therefore, discuss or deal with the chastity of Mary.

1 John, VIII : 57.
2 Lawrence, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 201.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, XXIX : 30-33.
4 *Ibid.*, XIX, 30-33, Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar : See Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon*, Vol. II : 375.

V. Christian critics of Islam refer to another verse of the Holy Qur-'an wherein it is stated that the Jews had been guilty of a great slander against Mary, and urge that the Jews could not have accused Mary of anything if Jesus had been born in the usual normal manner. They, therefore, say that it was because Jesus had no father that Jews felt compelled to question the chastity of Mary.

The verse runs:

> And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander (*buhtanan azeema*).[1]

This verse (156) occurs in Ch. IV which deals with the iniquities of the Jews generally both before and after the Ministry of Jesus in Palestine. It refers to their transgressions and recapitulates various salient incidents of Jewish refractoriness: their breach of the Covenant of Mount Sinai, their arrogance when humility was enjoined on them and their transgression of the Sabbath.[2] The crescendo, if that word be permitted, in the Qur-anic argument is remarkable. In the very next verse, we are told, that the Jews incurred Divine displeasure for their breach of the Covenant, their rejection of Allah's guidance as conveyed to them in His signs, their killing of His Messengers and their arrogantly imagining themselves to be above the Law.[3] Then begins another series of their iniquities from a different point of view: that they rejected the faith, they made false charges against Mary,[4] who was a chosen of God, and they boasted of having killed Jesus when they were in fact victims of their own hallucinations for they had neither killed nor crucified him.[5] The Holy Qur-'an then speaks of their punishment and the termination of His favours on them:

The coupling of the three events and the nature of their punishment speak for themselves for they show that the Holy Qur-'an is mentioning the Jewish allegations prevalent at the time the Holy Qur-'an was revealed and in any case to events after the termination of the Ministry of Jesus in Palestine. The Jews could only be punished for their disbelief in Jesus after the termination of his Ministry in Palestine. That they did not accuse Mary of adultery before or during the Ministry of Jesus in Palestine is a fact of history and that is why the Holy Qur-'an speaks of it with those events which took place *after* his Ministry in Palestine.

It is worth while to mention here the attitude of the Jews of his time regarding the birth of Jesus. To them Jesus

1 The Holy Qur-'an, IV : 156, Translation by *Hafiz* Ghulam Sarwar.
2 *Ibid.*, IV : 154.
3 *Ibid.*, IV : 155.
4 *Ibid.*, IV : 156.
5 *Ibid.*, IV : 157.

was a Jew born under the Law. They knew his parents, his brothers and sisters, and there are numerous references in the Gospels to both of his parents The Jews of his time did not accept his Divine Mission. They could not dream of his immaculate conception. To them either he was a legitimate son of Joseph and Mary or he was illegitimate.

> A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord: even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.[1]

But Jesus not only entered the synagogues but constantly preached in them. Could the Jews of his time have suffered him to do so if they had not believed him to be a legitimate son born in wedlock under the Law? The Samaritan Chronicles disclose that the Jews of his time took Jesus to be the son of Joseph and Mary.[2] The Talmudic expression that "Jesus was a carpenter, son of a carpenter"[3] finds support in the Rabbinical saying :

> Jesus was as legitimate as any other Jewish child of Galilee.[4]

Whiston in his Dissertation I to the works of Josephus says :

> All the believing Jews and all the rest of the Nazarene Jews esteemed Jesus with one consent, as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.[5]

Hastings also says :

> It is quite clear that Jesus was popularly looked upon by his contemporaries as Joseph's son by natural generation.[6]

After taking into consideration the contemporary writing and other Rabbinical literature, the compilers of the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, say :

> The Jews, who are represented as inimical to Jesus in the Canonical Gospels, took him to be legitimate and born in the ordinary natural way.[7]

The compilers of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, in discussing the birth of Jesus, say that "it is true that this (Luke IV : 22) was early understood to mean the son of Joseph," and cite Origen, who wrote his Commentary on Matthew as saying that the citizens of Nazareth believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary.[8]

It is obvious that the Jews among whom Jesus lived and preached did not question his legitimacy at all. They could not

1 Deut., XXIII : 2.

2 *Journale Asiatique*, (1869) II : 439.

3 *J. Yaban*, III : 2.

4 *Ab. Zar*, 3b.

5 Vol. III : 276.

6 Hastings : *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 808.

7 *Jewish Ency.*, Vol. VII : 170.

8 *Ency. Bib.*, Col. 3598.

have, therefore, accused Mary of unchastity during his Ministry in Palestine. So long as Christians did not assert the virgin birth of Jesus, Jews did not challenge his legitimacy. It was in the second century of the Christian era that the virgin birth theory was first put forward by Christians in support of the claim that Jesus was the son of God. The pagans and Jews then retorted with their charge of illegitimacy.

The Holy Qur-'an is only referring to this later charge, for such a charge was never made during the life-time of Jesus.

This verse cannot, therefore, be cited in support of the virgin-birth theory.

VI. The last objection of the Christians is that the Holy Qur-'an cites the case of Adam as a parallel to that of Jesus; therefore, Jesus, like Adam, was without a father. They urge that Jesus was created, like Adam, by a Divine Command :— ***kun fa yakoon.***

In this connection Christian critics of Islam refer to the following Qur-'anic verse :

> Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers.[1]

All Commentators of the Holy Qur-'an, ancient and modern, agree that these verses, along with some others, were revealed when the Holy Prophet was having a discussion with the Christians of Najran in the tenth year of the Hijra.[2] This deputation consisted of sixty men and was headed by Abdul Masih, the chief of the Christians of Najran.

The discussion took place in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet where the visitors had been lodged and permitted to hold their own prayers. In *Sirat-ul-Halabi*[3] the visit of this deputation is described in full detail. The point at issue was the divinity of Jesus. Abdul Masih, the leader of the Christians, opened the discussion and enquired from the Holy Prophet :

> They [4] said : "What do you think of our Lord (*Sahib*)?"
>
> The Messenger of God enquired : "Who is your Lord?"
>
> They replied : "Isa. Do you take him to be a servant of God?"
>
> The Messenger of God said : "Yes"

1 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 58-59.

2 Most of the commentators say that verses 1 to 62 of Chapter III were revealed at that time; some say that verses 1 to 83 were revealed at that [illegible].

3 *Allama* Burhan-ud-Din Halabi, *Sirat-ul-Halabi*, Vol. III : 4. See also *Asrar-ul-Muhammadia* of Ahmad Zeeni, Vol. II : 211.

4 The plural pronoun was used throughout to indicate that Abdul Masih was speaking on behalf of himself and his companions.

They then asked: "Have you seen any one like him or have you been informed of a man like him? He is God because he had no father, he raised the dead, he gave information of the unseen, he cured lepers and made birds from clay. Consider this superiority. Do you still call him a servant of God?"

The Holy Prophet did not answer at once for at that very moment came the Divine revelation and one of the verses revealed was:

Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam, He created him from dust, then said, Be, and he was.[1]

It may be noticed that the verse does not say that the creation of Jesus was like that of Adam. I now quote the discussion from *Tafsir Ibn Jarir at-Tabari* where it is recorded in full detail under this very verse:[2]

They questioned: "Who was his father?"[3]

The Messenger of God replied: *"Don't you know that no child is born but has a likeness to its father in form and appearance?"*

They said: "Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God said: "Don't you know that our God is alive and will never die and Jesus had to die?"

They said: "Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God said: "Don't you know that our God is One to Whom everything submits. He is the Custodian and Guardian of all and He gives sustenance to everyone?"

They replied: "Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God questioned: "Was Jesus possessed of any of these powers."

They replied: "No."

The Messenger of God then asked: "Did Jesus know of any of these things except those of which God gave him knowledge?"

They answered: "No."

The Messenger of God said: "Don't you know that Our God neither eats, nor drinks, nor does He answer the calls of nature?"

They said, "Yes, we know."

Then said the Messenger of God: *"Don't you know that Issa was conceived by a woman just as any other woman conceives a child, then she gave birth to him like every other woman gives birth to a child,* he was then reared up like other children, then he used to eat and drink and answer the calls of nature like other human beings?"

They said: "Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God then enquired: "How can Messiah be the One you take him to be (*i.e.*, God)?"

1 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 58.

2 *Tafsir Ibn i Jarir at-Tabari* Vol. III : 100 101.

3 The Christians, and the like of them even today put the same question to the Muslims

Rabi narrates that the Christians could not reply to this question, but would not agree either and insisted on their false belief. As a last resort the Holy Prophet invited them in the terms of the revelation:

> But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say : Come ! let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women, and our people and your people, then let us be earnest in prayer and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars.[1]

The Christians wanted time to consider the challenge and on the next day Abdul Masih and two of his companions informed the Holy Prophet that they had decided not to accept it, and that they would not pray against him nor invite him to pray against them. Thereupon an agreement was entered into whereby they were made free to practise their religion.

I have quoted this discussion verbatim to show how the Holy Prophet understood and explained "the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam," and how he illustrated his interpretation of the verse by referring to two very singular facts in the life of any man : Likeness of a child with his father in form and appearance and similarity in the conception and birth of every human child. These illustrations and the likeness with "Adam" would be inapplicable if "Adam" is taken to mean the Adam of the Bible who had neither a father nor a mother. According to the Bible he was not conceived by a mother.

Besides, the verse in question is universally relied upon by Muslims to refute the divinity of Jesus. But it cannot serve this purpose if Jesus was in fact compared with the Biblical Adam, *i.e.*, if his birth was without a father. No, the word 'Adam' in this verse means nothing more than a *man*. *Hazrat* Ibn-i-Abbas interpreted the word *Adam* in the verse as *man* for he said that man and not *Adam* (as a distinct entity) was created from dust. This verse, he said, could only be an argument against the Christians if by *Adam* is meant man.[2]

It may also be mentioned that the Holy Qur-'an does not accept the Biblical theory of the creation of Adam. Indeed, the Book does not state at all when and how Adam was born.

Imam Bacir, the great Muslim divine, is reported to have said : "Millions of Adams had passed away before our father Adam." Ibn Arabi, the great Sufi, writes in his wonderful work, *The Fatuhat*, that forty thousand years before our Adam, there was another Adam.

Again, the creation of Adam is nowhere stated in the Holy Qur-'an. The Book does not say how he was made. Nowhere in the Holy Qur-'an is it stated that God created *Adam* from *turab* (dust) except in the verse under discussion and there *Adam*

1 The Holy Qur-'an, III, 61   2 *Tafsir Ibn-i-Hisham*, Vol. III : 233

stands for *man*. In fact, the word *turab* (dust) is used exclusively in connection with the creation of *man*.[1] Again, the creation of man alone, and not that of *Adam*, from clay (teen) is mentioned in the Holy Qur-'an.[2] Further, the term *salsal kalfakhkhar* (sounding clay, brittle like pottery) is also exclusively mentioned in connection with the creation of *man* and not that of Adam.[3]

It is obvious, therefore, that these stages of matter through which man is to pass in its evolution of creation refer to *man* alone.

The Holy Qur-'an speaks of Adam as being made a vicegerent of God on earth to whom *Iblis* refused to make obeisance.[4] In Chapter II the word *Adam* is used throughout,[5] yet all commentators take it as referring to man,[6] for man has been addressed as God's vicegerent on earth.

> And He it is who has made you successors in the land.[7]

> And God made all things on earth subservient to man.[8]

The following verses make it perfectly clear that in the terminology of the Holy Qur-'an *Adam* means *man* :

> And certainly We created *you* ; then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels : make obeisance to *Adam*.[9]

> And certainly We created man (*insan*) of clay (*salsal*) that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned in shape . . . . And when your Lord said to the angels : Surely I am going to create a mortal (*bashar*) of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape. So when I have made him complete and *breathed into him of My spirit*, fall down and make obeisance to him.[10]

> When your Lord said to the angels : Surely I am going to create a mortal (*bashar*) from dust (*teen*). So when I have made him complete and *breathed into him of My spirit*, then fall down making obeisance to him.[11]

I may mention here that man being the vicegerent of God on earth, it is but natural that God's creation should bow before him. But according to the Holy Qur-'an *Iblis* (Satan), who represents our evil inclinations, did not. *Iblis* really is the root idea of desperateness, rebellion, perversity or enmity, or, in other words, our baser passions, which lead us to do wrong and commit sin. It is also noteworthy that according to these verses the

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XXII : 5; XXIII : 35, 82; XXVII : 67; XXX : 20; XXXV : II ; XL : 67 ; L : 3; LVI : 47 ; LXXVIII : 40.
2 *Ibid.*, VI : 2; VII ; 12 ; XVII : 61 ; XXIII : 12 ; XXXII : 7 : XXXVII : 11.
3 *Ibid.*, XV : 26-33.
4 *Ibid.*, II : 30-36 : XVIII : 50; XX : 116.
5 *Ibid.*, II : 31-37.
6 See translation by Yusuf Ali, p. 24 : *n.* 47; Muhammad Ali, p. 23, *n.* 449.
7 *Ibid.*, VI : 166.
8 The Holy Qur-'an, XIII : 2; XIV : 32-34 ; XVI : 10-19 ; XXII : 65 ; XXXI : 20 ; XLV : 12-13.
9 *Ibid.*, VII : 11.
10 *Ibid.*, XV : 26-29.
11 *Ibid.*, XXXVIII : 71-72.

spirit of God is breathed into every man,[1] and it is this spirit which enables man to distinguish between right and wrong, and which really stands for knowledge and reasoning and which makes us superior to all other creations of God.

The verse which I have just quoted narrate the same events, about the creation of man and the refusal of *Iblis* to bow before him. If we compare these verses with those of Chapter II; 36—39, we are led to the irresistible conclusion that *Adam* and *man* are interchangeable terms and that *Adam* stands for *man*[2] generally or as it has been said Adam is a symbol for man.[3] Ibn-i-Jarir also explains that "*like Adam*" means the likeness of or like a *man*.[4]

Therefore, when in Chapter III : 58 God spoke of the likeness of Jesus to be like that of Adam, the reference was to man as such who had been created of *turab* (dust). In this light the Qur-'anic verse clearly indicates that Jesus was like any other human being : and since this verse follows the events concerning the birth of Jesus, they clearly point out, in the words of the Holy Prophet, that "Jesus was conceived by a woman just as any other woman conceives a child" through a male agency.

The verse in question speaks of creation from *turab* (dust) It is the real term for or name of dust. It is a generic term which covers all its stages—dust itself, clay (*teen lazib*) and *salsal kalfakhkhar* (mud which is brittle like pottery)—the material, the physical and the spiritual stage which is reached after the Divine Spirit has been breathed into it. The reference to *turab* (dust) is really to indicate the low origin, the humility and the humanity of man, for the life-germ is one of the products of dust in the living man. The Holy Qur-'an, therefore, uses this very term in connection with Jesus to show that like any other man he, too, was human and not Divine.[5]

The only other matter which needs consideration is the oft-recurring phrase : *kun fa yakoon*. This phrase refers to two independent stages : *kun* stands, so to say, for *amr* : command, which is premeasurement; and *yakoon* for actual creation or completion. God decides on an *amr* or in other words He commands it by saying *kun* (Be). Thus if we can postulate the primeval matter, it owes its origin to God Who is responsible for the first basis of existence "the Cause of all causes." *Kun* is merely the commanding stage. It is a single thing unrelated to time The

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XXXVIII : 71-72.

2 *Ibid.*, XVIII : 50 ; XX : 116-126 ; XVI : 61-65.

3 Yusuf Ali, *Translation of the Holy Qur-'an*, p. 613, n 1968.

4 *Tafsir Ibn-i-Jarir*, Vol. III : 189.

5 *Imam* Fakhr-ud-Din Razi, *Tafsir-i-Kabir*, Vol. II . 469. See also *Ruh-ul-Ma'ani*, Vol. I : 685.

next stage commences in the twinkling of an eye.[1] There is no interposition of time or condition between the Will and its consequence, for with the command the process of creation starts to which the term *khalaqa* is to be applied.[2] This again involves the idea of measuring and fitting into a scheme already ordained. It means that function of creation, in case of man, which is laid down in the Holy Qur-'an itself; that is the function whereby the germ holds and gradually becomes a clot, flesh and bones and then takes the shape of man.[3] Thus with *kun* the process of creation starts and this is represented by *fa yokoon* (and it is). But although the process of creation starts at once, yet it does not mean that it is also completed immediately. The Holy Qur-'an speaks of the creation of the heavens and earth in six periods or stages.[4] Even if the word *yaum* is translated as *day* it cannot be styled as immediate yet *kun fa yakun* has been rightly applied to their creation; for after the command, the creation started immediately and became completed in due course of time appointed by God.[5] Similarly in the creation of all that we find on the earth six stages are mentioned : water,[6] earth,[7] vegetation,[8] worms, insects, reptiles, animals,[9] and finally man.[10] The Book, in fact, points the final evolution of man from the animal stage. The Holy Qur-'an says :

> There is no animal that walks upon the earth . . . . but (they are) genera like you.[11]

The Holy Qur-'an also mentions six parallel stages in the physical evolution of man : dust, life-germ, clot, flesh, bones and breathing of the spirit of God in making man perfect.[12]

After the command of *kun*, the process of creation starts but the stages of creation have to be completed in due course of time.

In the case of Jesus, the *amr* or command was that Mary should give birth to Jesus. The process of creation started at once and she got married and conceived him. And after the appointed time, during which she travelled to different places, she gave birth to Jesus. *Kun fa yikoon* in her case did not and could not mean that God commanded and Jesus was born forthwith, for the Book itself speaks of his being conceived by Mary and also of the different stages of her pregnancy. That is why

1 The Holy Qur-'an LIV : 50.
2 *Ibid.*, VII : 54, X : 3, XI : 7.
3 *Ibid.*, XXIII : 12-14.
4 *Ibid.*, VII : 54.
5 Translation of Muhammad Ali, p. 31, *n.* 163 (IIIrd Edn.)
6 *Ibid.*, XXI : 30.
7 *Ibid.*, XVIII : 37, XXX : 22 etc. (Dust) VI : 2; VII : 11-12 etc. (Clay) XV : 26, 28 ; LLX : 13-14 etc. (Black Mud).
8 *Ibid.*, VI : 100 ; X : 24 ; XIII : 45 ; XX : 54 ; XXVII : 60-66.
9 *Ibid.*, II : 164.
10 *Ibid.*, XXXI : 10, etc.
11 *Ibid.*, VI : 38. The Holy Qur-'an also mentions that as a punishment for their insolence certain men were degraded to the next lower stage of animality i.e. commanded " Be ye apes." See *Ibid.*, II : 65 ; VII : 166.
12 *Ibid.*, XXII : 5 ; XXXV : 11-12.

the Qur-'anic reference to the second *kifalat*, which is really an indication of the marriage of Mary, is sandwiched in between the talk of the angels with Mary and the birth of Jesus.[1] It is thus made clear that *Kun* was followed by *fa yakoon* or in other words as soon as the command of God to Mary is mentioned the Book itself indicates how the process of *fa yakoon* started immediately in her case by drawing up lots for the selection of a husband for Mary.

To sum up, God could have created Jesus without a father but according to the Holy Qur-'an He did not do so and Jesus was born in the normal way. He was the son of Mary and Joseph the Carpenter.

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1 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 43.

PART IV

MISSION

CHAPTER XV

MISSION OF JESUS

And (God made Jesus) an apostle to the children of Israel.[1]

He (Jesus) was naught but a servant in whom We bestowed favour, and We made him an example for the children of Israel.[2]

Jesus, according to the Gospels, had been raised as a Prophet of God with threefold object : Firstly, to fulfil the Law; secondly, to "seek and save" the Lost Tribes of Israel; and, thirdly, to proclaim the advent of the *Paraclete*.

Regarding the Mosaic Law, Jesus had said :

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.[3]

And according to Luke, Jesus said :

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail.[4]

When Jesus was questioned about the way to eternal life, he said :

If thou wilt enter life, keep the Commandments.[5]

Jesus was a Jew, and he never contested the lawfulness of the functions of the *Teachers of the law.* He allowed them to continue *to sit in Moses' seat* and to explain the law. Addressing his disciples, he said :

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat : All, therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works : for they say and do not.[6]

It is clear, therefore, that Jesus believed in and observed the law and asked his disciples to do the same. According to him the Law and the Prophets were, and continued to be, the foundations of righteousness; and only by fulfilling their commandments was it possible to enter the Kingdom of heaven. The Gospels are full of his confirmations of the Law of Moses. Jesus referred to this Law. when questioned about divorce, and said :

1 The Holy Qur-'an, III : 48.
2 *Ibid.*, XLIII : 59.
3 Matt., V : 17-20
4 Luke, XVI : 17.
5 Matt., XIX : 17.
6 Matt., XXIII : 2-3.

For the hardness of your heart he (Moses) wrote you this precept.[1]

Jesus confirmed and heightened the commands regarding the law of retribution,[2] the law of love,[3] and also affirmed the Commandments by enjoining:

Thou shalt not kill.[4]

Thou shalt not commit adultery.[5]

Thou shalt not forswear thyself.[6]

When one of the scribes came and asked him: "Which is the first commandment of all," Jesus replied:

The first of all the commandments is, *Hear O Israel*, The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, this is the first commandment.[7]

Jesus was merely quoting *verbatim* the words of Moses.[8] He then repeated the other commandments of Moses.

It has often been suggested that, in the following parable, Jesus indicated a change of the old law.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine be spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.[9]

It has been argued that *the old* referred to Judaism and by *the new* Christianity was meant. But a reference to the context will show that Jesus was in fact condemning certain Pharisaical practices; *e.g.* the Jewish people had started to fast, as a rule, on every Monday and Thursday, though the Law ordained fasting on particular days and for a specified period. Jesus merely wished to restrict the formalistic legalism and to some extent, ritualism. He did not abolish fasting; on the other hand he exhorted his followers to fast.[10] Jesus even followed the Jewish religious practice. He went to Jerusalem for the Major feasts. He kept the Passovers. He paid the Temple didrachma. He directed the leper, whom he had cured, to make the Temple offering[11] as commanded by Moses.[12] Matthew attributes to him a remark insisting on the need of being reconciled with "thy brother (who) has ought against thee before bringing thy gift to the altar,"[13] which clearly shows that he regarded the making of offerings to the altar as being necessary or at least lawful.

It is true that Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple,[14] but he also tried to purify it, and turned out the money-changers.[15]

1 Mark, X: 5.
2 Matt., V: 38.
3 Matt., V: 43.
4 Matt., V: 21.
5 Matt., V: 27.
6 Matt., V: 33.
7 Mark, XII: 29; *cf.* Luke, X: 27; Matt., XXII: 37.
8 Deut., VI: 4 5.
9 Mark, II: 22.
10 Matt., VI: 16.
11 Matt., VIII: 4; Mark, I: 44.
12 Lev., XIV: 3, 4, 10.
13 Matt., V: 23.
14 Mark, XIII: 1-3; *cf.* Luke, XXI: 5-6.
15 Mark, XXI: 5.

In all these he was merely delivering a message already proclaimed by the Prophets of yore.[1]

The attitude of Jesus towards religious practices, and rites was, therefore, the same as his attitude towards the Law. He, no doubt, tried to restrict formalism; but in this he was merely giving effect to the creed of the Essenes Order. His hatred of the house of Hanan, the high-priest, and the actions of Jesus in the Temple, become easy to understand in this light. In short Jesus, as a Jew, conformed to the Law of Moses and asked others to do so. Nowhere did he abolish the Law. Nowhere did he withdraw himself from Judaism.

The Israel of old believed themselves to be the chosen people of God; they considered Jehovah to be exclusively their God. Gradually, however, there was a leaning towards universalism. Passages can be found, even in the Old Testament,[2] which indicate this tendency. But the motive underlying this was a patriotic fervour, that is to say, the inheritance of the Jews was extended to all mankind only on the understanding that all humanity must first become converted to Judaism. The promised kingdom was for the house of Israel only, but now the house included not only the descendants, according to the flesh, but also the accretions by conversion : the true children of the seed and the adopted ones became equal members of this house. The so-called universalism of the Jews was, therefore, only an extension of their particularism, but it never included those who did not subscribe to Judaism.

Jesus was not a universalist even in this narrow sense. He had come with a Gospel to the house of Israel. In spite of the rejection of his Gospel by them, he never preached it to the Gentiles; for he said:

> It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs.[3]

Jesus "was a minister of the circumcision,"[4] and he had come "unto his own."[5] He advised his disciples not to *throw pearls before dogs and swines*.[6] The incident of the Canaanite woman, begging Jesus to save her daughter, is too well known. In spite of the intervention of some of his disciples, he took a firm stand and proclaimed the object of his advent and mission in the following words:

> I am not sent but unto the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel.[7]

On another occasion, he said:

> For the son of man is come to save that which *was lost*.[8]

1 Mic., III: 12; Jer., XXVI 18; Enoch, XC : 287.
2 Jer., XXXI: 33; Ps., XXII: 27; XLVII: 1-7.
3 Matt., XV: 26.
4 Rom., XV: 8.
5 John, I : 11.
6 Matt., VII: 6, Mark, VII: 27.
7 Matt., XV: 24.
8 Matt., XVIII: 11

In Luke he is reported to have said:

The son of man is come to *seek and save that which is lost.*[1]

The following incident also makes the position absolutely clear. When Caiaphas, the high priest, was told of the things that Jesus did and said, he addressed the Jews in Palestine, that is the two Tribes, incited them to kill Jesus and said:

Ye know nothing at all nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not.[2]

To this, the evangelist retorted:

And not for that nation only, but he also should gather together in one the children of God that were *scattered abroad.*[3]

It has often been contended that in this verse mankind generally was being referred to; but the terminology used was the one, which in the time of Jesus, applied only to the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. To remove all doubts, however, I will quote the directions which Jesus gave to his twelve disciples when he sent them to preach his Gospel in the country. He commanded them:

Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to *the lost* sheep of the house of Israel.[4]

In Luke, Jesus spoke of the nature of the kingdom and the functions of the twelve disciples in that kingdom. There also their duties were confined to the twelve tribes of Israel only: for he said:

And I appoint to you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the *twelve tribes of Israel.*[5]

In face of these clear words, there can be no room for the conjectures of the Christian apologetics. Jesus repeatedly pointed out the limits of his mission, even if in doing so he exhibited his human limitations. Jesus did not, and could not, at the time he said these words, foresee his betrayal by Judas Iscariot; or that because of this betrayal one of the thrones would be left vacant. Of course, Christians can always put on it Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

This is another aspect of the question. Jesus, no doubt, is credited with having looked with favour on individual Gentiles because of their faith. His talk with the woman of Samaria[6] is in point. But the more ancient commentators, like Heracoleon and Origen,[7] have seldom refrained from giving this interview of Jesus an allegorical interpretation on the ground that the

1 Luke, XIX : 10.
2 John, XI : 49-50.
3 John, XI : 52.
4 Matt., X : 5-6.
5 Luke, XXII : 29-30.
6 John, IV : 21.
7 *Comm. on Joan*, t. 13.

entire scene had a legendary and poetic colouring. According to Peake the passage, as it stands, reflects the ideas of the author's own time and he thus doubts its genuineness.[1]

It is evident, therefore, that the idea of breaking down Jewish barriers, and of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, or to the world at large, did not enter the mind of Jesus; and that his attitude towards universalism was far more strict and narrow than that of his countrymen and co-religionists: who, while deprecating the admission of the Gentiles into the Jewish fold, did relax in case of their conversion to Judaism.

It is true that the *Risen Lord* is made to express the contrary view. But, it is, I think, wholly superfluous to point out that a correction in the teachings of the *living* Jesus cannot thus be allowed to be made. In any case, the relevant passages are the products of subsequent interpolations *i.e.*, the passages contained in the last Chapter of Mark are now admitted to be much later additions. All these assertions,[2] put in the mouth of the *Risen Lord*, cannot really be attributed to Jesus. Had he claimed to be the founder of a new religion, or even to give a new form to the Jewish faith, he would have extended his mission over a wider field and not confined himself to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

The Acts record an incident which conclusively proves that these alleged instructions of Jesus are much later additions. We are told that Peter converted the heathen centurion called Cornelius. But because it was not hidden from the Lord, with what difficulty Peter would be willing to receive a heathen, the Lord felt the necessity of preparing him for such a step by a symbolic vision directing Peter to eat "common and unclean" things. Peter doubted what the vision meant and the spirit had to appear again to point to the three emissaries of Cornelius who had been sent to fetch Peter, as being the things he had seen in his vision. In consequence of such an admonition Peter went to Cornelius. On reaching Cæsarea he said to such invitees who were present and fresh converts to Christianity :

> Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto *one of another nation*; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.[3]

> The word which God *sent unto the children of Israel*, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all).[4]

This clearly proves that Jesus never directed his disciples to preach his Gospel to the Gentiles. Peter's words are absolutely clear and the editorial gloss in parenthesis makes them still

1 Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, 750.

2 Mark, XVI : 15.

3 Acts, X : 28.

4 Acts, X : 36.

clearer. In spite of his vision Peter hesitated and to compel him to baptize Cornelius and his family, he needed a further excuse: the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on those uncircumcised. On this "they of the circumcision which believed were astonished,"[1] and

> The Apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem they that were of circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them.[2]

Peter had to appeal to an oracle and he "rehearsed the matter from the beginning."[3]

> Thus when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*[4]

They were wondering and doubting still. But, in spite of this, most of them adhered to the wishes of Jesus rather than act according to Peter's vision; for:

> They which were *scattered abroad upon the persecution* that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, *preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.*[5]

It is, therefore, conclusively established that even after the death of Jesus, his disciples clearly knew and believed that the mission of Jesus was confined to the house of Israel. Not only this, they in fact acted as if they were altogether ignorant of any direction of Jesus to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Mission of Jesus was confined to seeking and saving the Jews in general and the Lost Ten Tribes in particular, for: The Messiah was to meet his own (Israel) again. We have a clear proof of this in the agreement come to at Jerusalem.[6]

1 Acts, X: 45.
2 Acts, XI: 1-2.
3 Acts, XI: 4.
4 Acts, XI: 18.
5 Acts, XI: 19.
6 Gal: II: 9.

CHAPTER XVI

KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus announced the coming of the promised Kingdom of God and the future advent of the *Comforter*. Such an announcement could necessarily be addressed only to those who had been recipients of the Promise and who derived their inspiration from them, in other words, the Jews. To Gentiles such an announcement would have been meaningless. Jesus, therefore, never addressed himself to them.

The coming of the Kingdom and the *Comforter* was in no way foreign to the religious life of Israel, since the pious Jews concentrated their thoughts at least three times a day on this Promise when they recited the *Shemoneh Esreh*, the eleventh petition of which contained a prayer dealing with the coming of the Kingdom.

Jesus never gave any definition of this Kingdom, and it must be taken for granted that his interpretation of the Kingdom was the same as that of his contemporaries. To Jews it implied the setting up *on earth* of a new order of things and of a new mode of life, a transformation of the world, beneficial not only to the righteous and the godly, but to all the children of Israel without discrimination. It was not deemed to be a purely *internal* and spiritual development; it involved an *external* and *material* change. The Kingdom was first of all to be established *on earth* by an act of Divine Power. It was essentially to be a gift of God, a material reality granted by Divine Providence to those who might prove themselves to be worthy of it. Underlying this hope was consequently the desire of a moral and ideal Kingdom; and also the idea of necessity, of human effort, of individual repentance by good *works*,[1] and an exact observance of the Law.

The Kingdom of God, as foretold by Jesus, was likewise for persons whose relations to God depended on their individual deserts. The good only were to be placed on the right hand of God;[2] and those on the left hand were to be cursed into everlasting fire which God had prepared for the devil and his angels.[3]

To Jesus the Kingdom of God was a reality of the future *on earth*. He never said, *I bring you the Kingdom*. He merely expected its setting up.

It would be worth while to examine whether the Gospels speak of the Promise only or whether they represent Jesus as

1 Matt., V : 19; XVI : 27. 2 Matt. XXV : 34.
3 Matt., XXV : 41.

bringing it with him. There are numerous passages which speak of it as a thing to come. The disciples were to give the message "The Kingdom of God is at hand" and not that it had come. The prayer was for the Kingdom to come.[1] The beatitudes are all promises: "for them is the Kingdom of God," and "for they shall see God," are only two illustrations. On the way to Jerusalem the sons of Zebadee asked for seats of honour in the Kingdom, and even at the Last Supper Jesus looked towards the future when he said that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God should come.[2] This, in fact, points more definitely than anything else to the future rather than the present.

Jesus merely claimed to be the *way*[3] to this Kingdom. He had merely to prepare the Jews for it and to acquaint them with its *mysteries* by parables.[4] The three parables of the Kingdom: that of the Feast,[5] that of the Talents,[6] and that of the Wise and Foolish Virgins[7]—all of them show the close relationship between the preparation for the future Kingdom, represented by the activities of Jesus, and the future advent of the Kingdom. Jesus never represented his activities as actually ushering in the Kingdom. It would be a singular perversion to regard the parables of the Sower,[8] of the Measure,[9] and of the Merchant selling a pearl[10] as supporting the theory that the Kingdom had come in the time of Jesus. These parables prove nothing, or rather, what they do prove, at the most, is that Jesus established a connection between his prophetic mission and the future approach of the Kingdom.

Again, Jesus did not give any definite answer when questioned as to the exact time of the setting up of the Kingdom. Mark puts into his mouth:

> Verily I say unto you, that there be *some* of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.[11]

The word *some* is very significant, as it points to a delayed future time. Again:

> Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.[12]

1 Mat., VI : 10; Luke, IX : 2
2 Luke., XXII : 18.
3 John., XIV : 6.
4 John., XVII : 11.
5 Matt., XXII : 2-14; Luke XIV : 16-24.
6 Matt., XXV : 14-30; Luke, XIX : 12-27.
7 Matt., XXV : 1-13
8 Matt., XIII : 3-8; Mark, IV : 3-8; Luke, VIII : 5-8.
9 Mark., IV : 24
10 Matt., XIII : 46.
11 Mark., IX : 1; Matt., XVI : 28; Luke, IX : 27.
12 Mark., XIII : 30 See also Matt., XXIV · 34

It is idle to urge that by this verse Jesus meant to indicate the setting up of the Kingdom in his time. If this be so, Jesus stands self-contradicted by the next verse but one in which he confesses complete ignorance of the event.[1] Peake's comments on this verse [2] are very significant He says :

> A Jewish apocalypse which may be held to have included 7f, 12, 14, 17-22, 20, 27, 30, has been edited, together with genuine utterances of Jesus, in order to strengthen the faith of Christians about thirty or forty years after the Crucifixion, when they were perplexed by the delay of the appearance of their Lord. The parenthesis to the reader in 15, if it is not a later gloss, suggest that a writing of some kind, not a report of a speech, forms the basis of this chapter.[3]

We have yet to consider another passage · when Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Gospel, he commanded them :

> And ye go preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.[4]

> Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come.[5]

It need hardly be pointed out that the disciples did return from their wanderings without the ushering in of the Kingdom. In all these three passages, one can detect the editorial influence going to the length of invention, and the evangelists as writing for a circle dominated by the expectation of the Promise. If scepticism regarding the authenticity of these three passages, or at least of their contents, be not carried to its logical conclusion, the only inference which can be drawn from them is that Jesus did not know, or foresee, or announce the precise time of the coming of the Kingdom. Indeed he said :

> But of that day and that hour, knoweth no man no, not even the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray · for ye know not when the time is [6]

The Church has always found this verse difficult. Jesus confessed a limited knowledge and ignorance about a point of utmost importance. In any case this verse cuts at the very roots of the theory that the Kingdom was ushered in the time of Jesus.

The next question concerns the place of the manifestation of the expected Kingdom. For the Jews only one answer was conceivable : Jerusalem. This belief found expression in the *Shemoneh Esreh*.[7] It is extremely common in the Sibylline Oracles,[8] and occurs also in the *Johannine Apocalypse*.[9] The ideology of the Jews of the time of Jesus and of his disciples is aptly disclosed in their disappointment at the time the events had taken place concerning Jesus, whom they believed to be a "prophet."[10] While walking back from Jerusalem, two of his disciples had said :

1 Matt., XIII. 32
2 Mark XIII · 30
3 Peake. *Commentary on the Bible* 696.
4 Matt., X. 7.
5 Matt., X : 23.
6 Mark. XIII: 32-33; Matt., XXIV: 36
7 *Shemoneh Esreh*, 17.
8 Sib. Or., III : 657, 785· V : 420.
9 Rev., XXI : 10.
10 Luke, XXIV : 19.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.[1]

But Jesus did not agree with the Jews. He cursed Jerusalem and prophesied that it should be made *desolate*.[2] To indicate that it would not be even in Judæa, he also cursed the other cities in Palestine.[3]

To sum up, Jesus did not believe that the Kingdom would be set up on earth as the result of his preachings, but that by announcing the Kingdom, he was proclaiming the way for it, and by immediately preceding it he himself served as an introduction to it. He believed that there was a clear connection between his own activities and the future interposition of God, and he never confounded his ministry with the future Kingdom. He believed that the Kingdom would be an actual realization on earth of Divine righteousness and happiness; a visible and sensible state of bliss for the good seed, the true sons of the Kingdom [4] according to their deserts. There would, therefore, be no further need of an intermediary between them and their heavenly Father

1 Luke, XXIV : 21.
2 Luke, XIII : 34.
3 Matt., XI : 21-23, Luke, X: 13, 15.
4 Matt., XIII : 38.

CHAPTER XVII

PARACLETE

I have already mentioned that Jesus was conscious of the limits and scope of his mission. He knew that his message was meant only for the house of Jacob, the Israelites. He was aware of their glorious past, as the chosen people of God; and that Prophets had been raised amongst them for their guidance, whom they had disbelieved, maltreated and persecuted, even killing some of them. To his knowledge, the house of Jacob had, time and again, proved to be utterly unworthy of the trust thus reposed in them; and had rendered themselves unfit for future favours. He also knew that the Lord Himself had said :

> Ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from My ordinance and have not kept them. Ye are cursed with a curse.[1]

The Prophet Isaiah had also, before Jesus, informed Israel of the wrath of God and that the Lord had "hid His face from the house of Jacob."[2]

The time had, therefore, come when the house of Jacob should be punished, and made an example to the whole world. But God in His Divine Wisdom does not punish anyone without giving him an opportunity for repentance. So Jesus was sent as a *Nasir*, a warner, to the twelve tribes of Israel living in Judaea and elsewhere. He tried to save them from the Divine Judgment. He addressed the two tribes in Judaea first; but they mocked at him, scorned him and persecuted him. He then cursed them; by cursing the fig-tree,[3] he cursed the house of Jacob. Dummelow says :

> The curse of perpetual barrenness pronounced by Jesus upon the fig-tree *i.e.*, upon Israel, has received a signal fulfilment. In the time of Christ it was an active missionary religion ...now it enrols no proselytes.[4]

Jesus not only cursed Israel, but he also cursed the important towns of Judaea, Jerusalem in particular,[5] and thus made the significance of this curse absolutely clear. In this matter he was very precise and explicit. He warned them :

> The Kingdom of God *shall be taken away from you and given to a nation,* bringing forth the fruit thereof.[6]

Jesus was so clear in his pronouncement that, for once, those who heard him understood him unmistakably; for, in the next

1 Mal., III : 6-7, 9.
2 Isa., VIII : 17.
3 Matt., XXI : 19.
4 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 694-695.
5 Luke, XIII : 34; Matt., XI : 20-24; XXIII : 37.
6 Matt., XXI : 43.

but one verse, we are told that "They perceived that he spoke of them."[1]

Some Christian commentators of the Bible have endeavoured vainly to apply this prophecy of Jesus to Christian converts. They interpret the words *a nation* as referring to the Gentiles. But the Gentiles have never in history been described as *a nation*. A reference to the Old Testament, however, will exclude all possibilities of any such interpretation; for in that Book we come across many prophecies pointing out, in unambiguous terms, the nation referred to by Jesus.

The Lord had made a covenant with Abraham[2] and had blessed him with a promise that his seed should multiply exceedingly in numbers[3] and the same promise had been vouchsafed to Hagar, his wife.[4] To Abraham, the Lord had further promised :

> And I will make *a nation* of thee, and I will bless them and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee.[5]

If we read this prophecy with the promise to Hagar, the meaning becomes absolutely clear—they mean that a nation would be raised, through Hagar, which would be blessed by the Lord. He would make the name of this nation great and He would bless them, for they would bless Abraham. According to Dummelow the promise to Hagar was "fulfilled in the Arab race"[6] for *Paran* is still in possession of Beduin Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael.[7] But I am able to carry the matter still further. Abraham had prayed for posterity of Ishmael;[8] and his prayer had been answered :

> And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee : Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve tribes shall he beget, and *I will make him a great nation*.[9]

This assurance was given at a time when Sarah had not conceived Isaac. There was, of course, a similar prophecy regarding Isaac, the house of Jacob, but subsequently they came under the curse and consequently ceased to be a nation, as foretold by Prophet Jeremiah :

> The seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever.[10]

In order to appreciate these prophetic utterances, I must discuss at some length four other prophecies in the Old Testament, which must be read with the promise to Abraham and Hagar. The first is addressed to Moses :

1 Matt., XXI : 45.
2 Gen., XVII : 10.
3 Gen., XV : 5.
4 Gen., XVI : 30.
5 Gen., XII : 2-3.
6 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 25.
7 *Ibid.*, 29. See Gen., XXI : 17-21.
8 Gen., XVII : 18.
9 Gen., XVII : 20.
10 Jer., XXXI : 36.

I will raise them up *a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee,* and *will put words in his mouth* and he shall speak unto them *all that I command him.*1

The second reads:

Behold, a woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel, butter and honey* shall he eat. . . .2

Associate yourself O ye people (against him) and *ye shall be broken in* pieces, and give ear, all ye of far countries, *gird yourself* (against him) and ye shall be broken in pieces.3

Take counsel together (against him) and it shall come to nought: speak the word and it shall not stand; for *God is with us.* . . .4

(He will) *Bind up the testimony, seal the law* among my disciples.5

The third prophecy runs thus:

Behold *my servant* whom I uphold, *mine elect* in whom my soul delighteth. I have put in My *spirit upon him* 6 He *shall not fail* nor *be discouraged* till he have set judgment in earth. . . .7 Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a song, and His praise from the ends of the earth.8 Let the wilderness and cities thereof lift up their voice the *villages that Kedar doth inhabit.* . . .9 Here, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see. . . 10 Who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord? For they would not walk in His way, neither were they obedient unto His law.11

The fourth prophecy was:

But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law, ye have corrupted the convenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts 12

Behold, I will *send my Messenger*, and he shall prepare the way for Me. 13

To appreciate the real significance of these prophetic utterances, we must read them together in the light of the promises to Abraham and Hagar. I will, however, analyse these independently and show that they foretold the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and did not apply to Jesus.

I. The Promises to Abraham and Hagar

(a) A nation will be raised from their progeny and God will bless them and make them great.

Jesus belonged to the house of Jacob, was an Israelite and not an

The Holy Prophet Muhammad was in direct line of descent from Ishmael. It is for this reason that Abraham has been styled as his father and has also been describ-

1 Deut., XVIII : 18.
2 Isa., VII : 14-15.
3 Isa., VIII : 9.
4 Isa., VIII : 10
5 Isa., VIII : 16.
6 Isa., XLII : 1.
7 Isa., XLII : 4.
8 Isa., XLII : 9-10.
9 Isa., XLII: 11.
10 Isa., XLII : 18.
11 Isa., XLII : 24
12 Mal., II: 8.
13 Mal., III : 1.

Ishmaelite. Therefore, this did not apply to him.

ed as the progenitor of the Arabs.[1] The Holy Qur-'an records the following prayer of Abraham regarding the progeny of Ishmael: "Our Lord........(raise) from our offspring *a nation* submitting to Thee."[2]

(b) God will bless them, for they will bless Abraham.

Jesus did not bless Abraham. Christians do not remember or bless him in their prayers.

The Qur-'an sends peace on Abraham,[3] so did the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Holy Prophet and the Muslims, following the *Sunna*, say *Darud* at least eleven times in their five daily prayers, in which Abraham and his descendants are blessed.

(c) The descendants of Ishmael will be made a great nation.

See I (*a*) above. This is inapplicable to Jesus or to his followers.

No one can deny that the Arabs, after embracing Islam, did become a great nation.

II. The Prophecy of Moses

(a) A prophet will be raised from among their brethren.

See I (*a*) above. The address being to an Israelite Prophet the words "their brethren" cannot apply to Israel, *i.e.*, the house of Jacob. If, according to the Christian belief, the birth of Jesus was immaculate, he could not have been a descendant of Isaac and the question of *his brethren* can hardly arise.

Ishmael and Isaac, being sons of the same father, Abraham, were brothers. The descendants of the one would be the brethren of the progeny of the other. The term of *their brethren* has been applied to the progeny of Hagar[4] and of Ishmael.[5]

(b) That Prophet will be like unto Moses.

Nowhere does Jesus claim to be like unto Moses. His apostles or dis-

The Holy Qur-'an says: "Surely, We have sent to you an Apostle, a witness against you as We sent an Apostle to Pharaoh."[6] In another place it says:

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XC: 8.
2 *Ibid.*, II: 128.
3 *Ibid.*, XXXVII: 100.
4 Gen., XVI: 10-11.
5 Gen., XVII: 20.
6 The Holy Qur-'an, LXXIII: 15.

ciples have never asserted that Jesus was like unto Moses. In fact, if Jesus was the son of God, he could not be like unto Moses, who was a mortal.

"And a witness (Moses) among the children of Israel has been witness of one like him (Muhammad)."[1] Besides, the first six verses of Ch. 52 draw attention to a parallel set of facts in the revelations of Moses and Muhammad. Thus, the likeness of the Holy Prophet to Moses was indicated in a very early revelation. The Holy Prophet in a letter to one of the Christian Rulers described himself as a companion of Moses and urged that the prophecy of Moses applied to him.[2]

Maulvi Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, in his book: *Muhammad in the World Scriptures*, devotes a chapter: "*The Advent of a Prophet in the likeness of Moses*," to this subject and proves by quotations from the Bible and other ancient literature that *that Prophet* was the Holy Prophet Muhammad; and the reader, if interested, might read this book for a detailed study.

(*c*) *God will put His words into the mouth of that Prophet.*

Jesus was a prophet of God, and this part of the prophecy may be held to be applicable to him.

The Holy Qur-'an says:

And most surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.[3]

The Holy Spirit has revealed it from your Lord with *the truth*.[4]

Nor does he (Muhammad) speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed. The Lord of Mighty Power has taught him.[5]

The Beneficent God, taught the Qur-'an.[6]

And thus have We revealed to you an Arabic Qur-'an.[7]

Say (Muhammad) . . . it is only a delivery (of Communications) from Allah and His Message.[8]

(*d*) *That Prophet will address all nations.*

I have already explained that to his knowledge the mission of Jesus

The Holy Qur-'an says: "Blessed is He Who sent down the distinction upon His servant that he may be a Warner *to all nations*.[9]

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XLVI: 10.
2 *Sirat Ibn-i-Hisham*, Vol. I: 108.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, XXVI: 192.
4 *Ibid.*, XVI: 102.
5 *Ibid.*, LIII: 3-5.
6 *Ibid.*, LV: 1-2.
7 *Ibid.*, XLII: 7.
8 *Ibid.*, LXII: 22-23.
9 *Ibid.*, XXV: 1.

was confined to Israel: and, in particular, to the Lost Tribes (see Matt., XV : 24 etc.) and in fact he addressed himself to none besides Israel.

This is one of the very early Makkan revelations and shows that the message of the Holy Prophet was meant for *all nations* from the very beginning.

The Holy Qur-'an also claims that "it is nothing but a reminder to *all nations*"[1] from the very beginning and was also meant for those who had received the *Books* before.

The Holy Qur-'an also says: "We have not sent you (Muhammad) but as a mercy to *all nations*."[2] And the Holy Prophet is commanded: "Say, O Prophet! surely I am an Apostle of Allah to *you all*."[3] Again, the message of the Holy Prophet (Muhammad) was meant *for all* because God's mercy encompasses all[4] and because He is "the Creator of all the world."[5] This was one of the very earliest Makkan revelations. Thus Muhammad was the Prophet to all nations and had come to remove all barriers and limitations of nationality and colour. That the Holy Prophet succeeded in his mission is testified by Islamic history. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet which is pertinent to the discussion. He said: "I said I am the Apostle of Allah *to you all* but you said: You lie, and Abu Bakr said: You speak the truth." While dealing with the *Hadis* I have already mentioned the fact that the Holy Prophet sent letters to various Christian Rulers beyond Arabia to embrace Islam.[6] He sent some of his Companions to preach Islam to far off countries—even to China. He would not have done so if Islam, to him, had not been the universal religion.

(e) God will command that Prophet.

For reasons given in II (c) above this may be conceded to

The Holy Qur-'an says:

O you who are clothed (Muhammad), arise and warn.[7]

1 The Holy Qur-an VI : 91, LXVIII [illegible] LXXXI : 27 etc.
2 *Ibid.*, XXI : 107.
3 *Ibid.*, VII : 158.
4 *Ibid.*, VII : 156
5 *Ibid.*, I : 1.
6 *Ch. Sup.*, p. 76.
7 The Holy Qur-'an, LXXIV : 1-2.

be applicable to Jesus; though the Gospels disclose no such commands.

Peake, while dealing with this prophecy in Deuteronomy, says that "it contains no primary reference to the Messiah."[1]

Again:

O Apostle! declare what has been revealed to you from your Lord.[2]

And again:

Say (O Muhammad): My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He; and *this am I commanded*, and I am the first of those who submit.[3]

III. The Prophecy of Prophet Isaiah

(a) The Prophet shall be conceived of a woman.

In this particular verse the words *Haalmah* or *'alma* (women) has been confused with *Bethulah* (virgin) to make the prophecy applicable to Jesus. I will quote Peake again:

> The rendering "virgin" is unjustifiable...... the word employed here *'almah* means a young woman of marriageable age, without any suggestion that she is not married......It has, therefore, no reference to the birth of Jesus......The name Immanuel means "*God is with us*," not "God with us;" there is no reference in it to any Incarnation of God.[4]

Jesus was certainly born of a woman, through natural human agency. But the significance here is that the child will only be conceived of a woman and will not have the protection of his mother or father, as in the case of Moses. Jesus, as already shown, had the protection of his parents. Matthew unjustifiably applies this prophecy to Jesus.[5]

The Holy Prophet was a posthumous child of Abdullah. His mother, Amina, died when he was only six years old. Thus in his tender years he was deprived of both his parents. The significance of the prophecy is explained in the opposite column.

(b) He shall eat butter and honey.

Nowhere are we told that the usual diet of Jesus was butter or honey. On the contrary, in his very first miracle he converted pure water into wine.[6] He must have been eating food and drinking wine heavily, for people to have called him a "gluttonous man"[7] and "a wine-bibber."[8]

The usual and staple food of the Holy Prophet consisted of dates, barley bread and milk. Abu Daud records that the Holy Prophet used to take delight in

1 Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 239.
2 The Holy Qur-'an V: 67.
3 *Ibid.*, VI: 163-164.
4 Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 442.
5 Matt., I: 23-24.
6 John, II: 8 9.
7 Matt., XI: 19.
8 Luke, VII: 34.

eating *butter* and Bukhari records a similar *Hadis* regarding *honey.*

(c) People will associate, counsel and gird themselves against him, but they shall be broken in pieces.

It is true that the Pharisees and Sadducees did associate and hold counsels against Jesus, but they were not broken in pieces, certainly not during his life-time. In any case they did not gird themselves against him. To "gird yourself" means "warfare."[1]

It would merely be repeating history to say that the idolaters of Makka conspired together to persecute and kill Muhammad. By degrees, no doubt, the persecution grew. But the conversion of *Hazrat* Hamza and *Hazrat* Umar infuriated them. The Holy Prophet suffered indignities at their hands. His followers had twice to emigrate to Abyssinia. In the end Muhammad himself had to leave Makka and take refuge in Madina. The Makkans did not only conspire against the Holy Prophet but actually "girded themselves" to warfare. They with 1,000 men attacked at Badr the Muslims who were only 313 in number. The Makkans were routed, and two years after they attacked again, 3,000 strong, and a battle had to be fought at Uhud The Muslims numbered 1,000. In this battle the Muslims suffered a setback. *Hazrat* Hamza, the uncle of the Holy Prophet was killed and the Holy Prophet himself received injuries. But neither the Holy Prophet nor his followers were discouraged by this defeat. The Makkans again in the following year attacked with an army of 10,000 men and in the battle of Ahzab besieged Madina itself; but this time they were defeated. I am not concerned here with any justification of these wars. I am only pointing out that the Makkans did "associate, counsel and gird themselves" against the Holy Prophet Muhammad. That they were broken up in pieces is, again, a matter of history. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad entered Makka as the Supreme Ruler of Arabia, he forgave them all—even Hinda who had devoured the

1 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible,* 419.

raw liver of *Hazrat* Hamza, after removing it from the dead body on the battlefield of Uhud.

(d) That Prophet will be Immanuel, i.e., to him "God is with us" will apply.

Immanuel is a prophetic, and not a real, name, and has a significance of its own. The clue is to be found in its meaning: *God is with us.* Instead of God being with Jesus, he actually complained of his having been forsaken by Him.[1] By this utterance Jesus in fact confessed that at the most crucial moment of his life God was not with him. Matthew wrongly applied this name to Jesus[2] and based on it his theory of *virgin birth,* which in itself is not based on reality.

The idolaters of Makka had conspired to kill Muhammad. Most of the followers, with the exception of *Hazrat* Abu Bakr and *Hazrat* Ali, had already, at the suggestion of the Prophet, emigrated to Madina The Holy Prophet left Makka with *Hazrat* Abu Bakr. The city was in a ferment when this fact became known. The Quraish sent scouts in all directions to trace the whereabouts of the Holy Prophet. To avoid detection he and his Companion took refuge in one of the caves of Mount Saur for three days. The persecutors of Makka, still continuing the pursuit, arrived before the cavern. The expert trackers positively declared from the footprints that the wanted men were inside the cave. The two inside heard their conversation. There was no other outlet. *Hazrat* Abu Bakr felt it to be a time of jeopardy, and he whispered his fears that they were but two against many. "Fear not, Abu Bakr," said the Holy Prophet, "we are not two. Surely *God is with us.*"

The spider's web against the entry to the cavern, however, convinced the Makkans that the Holy Prophet Muhammad could not be inside: and they left. This testimony proves that *God is with us* was a prophetic reference to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He repeated exactly the words of the Prophet Isaiah.

This incident is referred to in a much later revelation (at Madina) in the Holy Qur-'an :

> Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his Companion : Grieve not, surely *Allah is with us.*[3]

1 Matt., XXVII : 46.
2 Matt., I : 23.
3 The Holy Qur-'an, IX : 40.

Moses used the same phrase [1] when he was being followed by the Egyptian host.

I have already given brief details of the three battles which the Holy Prophet was compelled to fight. His belief in the ultimate triumph of his cause, his faith that *God was with him* brought victory after victory to him; although on each occasion the odds were against him, yet his enemies were broken into pieces.

I will refer to two other incidents of his life. In the Battle of Hunain, the Hawazin, famous throughout Arabia for their prowess in archery, had gathered in great numbers and drawn up in masked recesses of the valley commanding the steep and narrow defile which formed the only entrance of the valley. As the Muslims approached the valley, the Hawazin sprang from their ambuscade and charged impetuously down upon them. Staggered by the sudden onslaught the Muslims fell back, and the galling archery of the enemy compelled a retreat. Instead of going to his fast retreating followers the Holy Prophet advanced alone towards the enemy, shouting: *"I am the Prophet and I am not a liar. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib."* A handful of Companions ran towards him and followed him. They were met with showers of arrows, "so thick and well sustained that they darkened the sky like a flight of locusts." The Holy Prophet picked up, as he had done at Badr, a handful of gravel, and cast it at the enemy, saying "God hath cast fear into their hearts." The noble example of the Holy Prophet and the clarion call of *Hazrat* Abbas brought the rest of the followers to the side of the Holy Prophet shouting: *Labbaik, Labbaik ya Rasulallah*: "Here we are, here we are, O Messenger of God!" The fight that ensued was fierce and cruel but in the end the faith of the Holy Prophet in *God being with him* won the day for the Muslims.

1 The Holy Qur-'an, XXVI: 61-62.

The second incident is even more singular. The Holy Prophet was sleeping under a tree alone at a distance from his camp. Ghauris bin Haris, his deadliest enemy, saw him, and drawing his sword, stealthily approached him. The Holy Prophet awoke and saw him. Ghauris taunted: "O Muhammad! who is here to protect and save thee?" Calmly came the reply from the Holy Prophet: "Allah." Ghauris was struck with awe, and the sword fell from his hand. The Holy Prophet picked it up and in his turn questioned him: "O Ghauris, who is there now to save thee?" "No one," pleaded Ghauris. "Then," said the Holy Prophet, "learn from me to forgive and to be merciful to your enemies." With these words the Holy Prophet returned him his sword. This incident proves better than any other that the Holy Prophet had not only a unique faith in God but that he also believed that *God was with him.*

(c) That Prophet will bind up the testimony and seal the law.

"Bind up the testimony" according to Peake means: "secure the preservation of his own prophecies."[1] I have already shown the worth of the Gospels. Jesus did not preserve his revelations or prophecies. He also did not seal the law, *i.e.*, he did not bring the final code. He had, in fact, come to fulfil the law of Moses[2] and had enjoined his followers to keep the Com-

I have already described at great length, how the Holy Prophet during his life took every possible measure to preserve the Holy Qur-'an in its pristine purity, and that the Book as we have it to-day is word for word the same as it was in his life-time. He also *sealed the law.* The Holy Qur-'an says:

> Muhammad is not the father of any of you, but he is the Apostle of Allah and *the seal of the Prophets*, and Allah is cognizant of all things.[3]

He could not have been the seal of the Prophets, *i.e.*, the last of the Prophets if he had not sealed the law.

Says the Holy Qur-'an:

> This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as your religion.[4]

The Holy Prophet did *seal* the law, for the law promulgated by him is everlasting. No prophet could come or has come

[1] Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 443.
[2] Matt., V: 17.
[3] The Holy Qur-'an, XXXIII: 40.
[4] *Ibid.*, V: 3.

mandments of Moses.[1] He did not bring any new law and cannot be said to have "sealed" it. On the contrary he foretold the advent of the Comforter who shall "teach you all things"[2] and "guide you into all truth."[3]

during the last 1400 years. The Holy Prophet's Mission was universal[4] even for the *People of the Book*, to whom previous prophets had come.[5] If the Holy Qur-'an had lost its pristine purity there would of necessity have come a new Prophet and a new law to earth. But the finality, the sealing of his revelation, saw its perfection too. In the Holy Prophet Muhammad the manifestation of Divine Will was accomplished. His law meets the requirements of all ages and all countries. That is why he *sealed the law* and said:

"There will be no prophet after me."

(f) The Prophet will be a servant of God.

Jesus called himself *Son of Man*; and later others called him the *son of God*. Therefore, according to their faith, this aspect of the prophecy could not apply to him. I would, however, maintain that it did, because, like other Prophets of God, he also was a servant of God and not the son of God.

The Holy Qur-'an describes the Holy Prophet in these words:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the distinction upon His *servant* that he may be warner to the nations."[6]

Again:

"And He revealed to His *servant* what He revealed."

The Islamic formula of Faith, *Kalima* includes: "I bear witness that Muhammad is the *servant* and Apostle of Allah."

The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"I sit at meals as a *servant*, I eat like a *servant*, for I really am a *servant*."

(g) He will be an elect of God with whom God will be pleased.

I would say that, as a Prophet of God, this did apply to Jesus.

Equally this would apply to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He is reported to have said:

"Verily Allah created the creation and made me among the best of them. . . ."

Again:

"Behold! I am the beloved of Allah and there is no exaggeration in this. . . ."

1 Matt., XIX: 17
2 John, XIV: 26.
3 John, XVI: 13.
4 The Holy Qur-'an, VII: 158.
5 *Ibid.*, VI: 91-93; XXXIV: 28; LXVIII: 52; LXXXI: 27, etc.
6 *Ibid.*, XXV: 1.

(*h*) *That Prophet will not fail, nor will he be discouraged and he shall accomplish his mission and thus shall deliver judgment of God.*

Jews and Christians alike believe, though for different reasons, that Jesus had died on the cross—according to the Jews an accursed death.[1] In these circumstances, can anyone say that Jesus fulfilled his mission on earth? He should not have, if the prophecy in fact applied to him, felt discouraged. His prayer on Gethsemane: "Let this cup pass away from me,"[2] and his cry of despair on the cross[3] show that he had lost all courage. Again, instead of bringing God's judgment on earth, *i.e.*, setting up the Kingdom of God on earth, he only prayed for its coming[4] and expressed ignorance as to when it would be set up.[5] He did not, however, set it up but, on the contrary, left the earth, according to the Christians, to sit at the right hand of God in heaven.

Says the Holy Qur-'an:

"Your companion (Muhammad) does not err, nor *shall he fail.*"

History proves, and even Christian critics have to admit, that he was "the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities."[6] Because he was ordained to be successful in his earthly Mission he was to have "a favour never to be cut off."[7] Regarding his courage of heart even a bigoted Christian like Sir William Muir had to admit:

> We search in vain through the pages of profane history for a parallel to the struggle in which for thirteen years the Prophet of Arabia, in the face of discouragement and threats, rejection and persecution, retained thus his faith unwavering, preached repentance, and denounced God's wrath against his godless fellow citizens. Surrounded by a little band of faithful men and women, he met insults, menace, and danger with a lofty and patient truth in the future.[8]

The Holy Qur-'an says:

> Is it then the judgment of the times of ignorance that they desire? And who is better than Allah to judge for a people who are sure.[9]

In the preceding verse the Holy Prophet is invited to judge people "by what Allah has revealed."

That he completed his mission on earth no one can deny. Idolatry vanished, the doctrine of the Unity and Infinite Perfection of God became a living principle in the hearts and lives of his followers and submission to the Divine Will became the governing rule of life. Nor were social virtues wanting Universal Brotherhood was inculcated, infanticide proscribed,

1 Deut., XXI: 33.
2 Matt., XXVI: 39.
3 Matt., XXVII: 46.
4 Matt., VI: 10.
5 Mark, XIII: 32: 33.
6 *Ency. Brit.*, Art. Qur-'an.
7 The Holy Qur-'an, LXVIII: 3.
8 Muir, *The Life of Mohammad*.
9 The Holy Qur-'an, V: 50.

orphans protected, slaves emancipated usury and intoxicating drinks prohibited.

Indeed, well may Muhammad, and he alone, say on his Farewell Pilgrimage: "O Lord! I have delivered my message and have accomplished my work."

(i) The inhabitants of the wilderness, the cities and villages of Kedar will sing his praises.

This did not apply to Jesus. He never addressed himself to the Arabs.

Kedar refers to "the tribes of Arabia."[1] The Prophet Jeremiah said that *Paran* will be the place, where Ishmael shall live.[2]

Paran according to Biblical geography was near Hijaz.

It is evident, therefore, that this prophecy could apply in all its details only to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

IV. The Prophecy of Prophet Malachi

That Prophet will not belong to the house of Jacob, for Israel did not walk in the way of the Lord and corrupted the covenant of Levi, and that Prophet will be the Messenger of God.

This prophecy does not apply to Jesus. The designation "Messenger of God" was never applied to him. He belonged to the house of Jacob, which had violated the covenant of Levi. The mention of this covenant and its breach excludes Jesus. In any case *that Prophet* had to be apart from the Messiah. Dummelow says:

> There is no Messinic prophecy in Malachi in the ordinary sense of the word.[3]

Peake observes that "Malachi was not predicting Christ."[4]

Taking the two together the Holy Prophet did not belong to the house of Jacob and was the *Messenger of God.*

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that out of all the principal components of these Biblical prophecies only three apply to Jesus, and that simply because they would suit the character of any Prophet of God. It can, therefore, be asserted that none of these prophecies really applied to him at all. On the other hand, all of them literally befit the life, character and mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

1 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 441. See also Peake, *Commentary on Bible*, 447.
2 Jer., XLIX, 7.
3 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 613
4 Peake, *Commentary on Bible*, 517.

But there is another aspect of the question. No one can deny that the Jews were expecting this prophet. For over a thousand years they had been expecting a Prophet like unto Moses. The Prophet Ezra, some nine hundred years after Moses, bewailed :

> And there arose not a prophet since in Israel *like unto Moses*, whom the Lord knew face to face.1

The Jews questioned, and enquired of every prophet that arose amongst them whether he was *that prophet*. They asked John the Baptist :

> Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou *that prophet*? And he answered, No. 2

This incident clearly shows that the Jews were anxiously awaiting three prophets : Elias, the Messiah and *that Prophet*. Thus Elias, according to Jesus, came in the person of John the Baptist. Jesus was the Messiah, and *that Prophet* had yet to come, for Jesus never put forward any claim to be *that Prophet*. This becomes abundantly clear, for John tells us that the Jews further questioned John the Baptist.

> Why baptizest thou then, if thou *be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet*.3

In fact, as I will presently show, Jesus himself confirmed their belief by promising the future advent of *that Prophet* whom he described as the *Paraclete*. Even after him, his apostles, like Peter, looked forward to the coming of *that Prophet*.4 Jude also referred to the same future event and said :

> And Enoch also, then seventh from Adam, prophesied of these sayings : Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints.5

Thus according to both Peter and Jude the *second* advent of Christ had to be preceded by the coming of *that Prophet*. If we read the 14th and 16th chapters of John's Gospel it will become apparent that Jesus was also responsible for these views. He said :

> But the Comforter which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you 6

> Hereafter I will not talk much with you for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.7

In another place, he is reported to have said :

> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the *Paraclete* will not come unto you, . . . and

1 Deut., XXXIV : 10 : *cf* Nu., XII : 6. Deut., XVIII : 15, 18.
2 John, I : 21.
3 John, I : 25.
4 Acts, III : 22.
5 Jude. 14. It is noteworthy that when the Holy Prophet conquered Makka, he had an army of exactly ten thousand.
6 John, XIV : 26
7 John, XIV : 30.

when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.[1]

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, *but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*: and he will show you the things to come. *He shall glorify me.*[2]

The words: *I have many things to say*, have been interpreted to convey that Jesus had much to say, but as they, the people of Judæa, would not listen to him, he must say them to another audience.[3]

In spite of the apparent contradiction in verses 26 and 30 (John, ch. 14th) the Prophecy is in unambiguous terms. The *Comforter* stands for the Greek word *Paraclete.* Wastenfells explains that the word used by Jesus was *Mauhamana* (Aramaic) and in Hebrew it was *Mauhamanna*—both meaning the *praised.* In the sister language, Arabic, this word would be *Muhammad* or *Ahmad* which are derived from the same root *Hamd*, which means *praising.*

Before discussing the Qur-'anic version regarding the fulfilment of this and the other prophecies in the person of the Holy Prophet, a reference should be made to the Gospel of St. Barnabas. Barnabas was an Apostle of Jesus,[4] selected by the Holy Spirit, an uncle of Mark the Evangelist,[5] and a companion of Paul.[6] He travelled throughout Palestine, from Damascus to Cæsarea, and from Philipi to Mt. Sinai, preaching the Gospel. His relics were discovered in a tomb in Cyprus in the fourth year of Emperor Zeno (478 C.E.) and a copy of his Gospel, written in his own hand, was found lying on his breast. The Gospel of St. Barnabas was condemned by the Church by three successive Decrees: the Decree of the Western Church (382 C.E.), of Innocent I (465 C.E.) and of Gelasius (496 C.E.) The Gelasian Decree mentions the *Evangelium Barnabe* in its index of the prohibited and heretical Gospels. The recovered Gospel gradually found its way to the library of Pope Sixtus V and it was found there in 1549 by a monk named Fra Marino.

The Gospel of St Barnabas was accepted and read in the Churches up to [illegible] Gelasian Decree. The Gospel contains a complete life of Jesus from his birth to his ascension It begins with the [illegible] birth of Jesus and deals with his circumcision, [illegible] the Magi, the Massacre of the Infants, the [illegible] and the return of the family from Egypt, and the [illegible] Temple. Its central portions deal with the [illegible] discourses, parables and ethical and eschato-

1 John, XVI: 7-8.
2 John, XVI: 12-14.
3 [illegible], 753
4 Acts, XIV: 14.
5 Col., IV: 10.
6 [illegible]

logical teachings of Jesus. Finally, it gives a description of the Paschal Supper and records the betrayal, the trial and the crucifixion. The Gospel concludes with the reappearance of the Lord and his ascension to heaven. After going through this very brief summary of its contents, one wonders why it was rejected by the Church. Sale alleged in his *Preliminary Discourse to the Koran* that it was a barefaced forgery and asserted :

> The Muhammadans have also a Gospel in Arabic attributed to St. Barnabas, wherein the history of Jesus Christ is related in a manner very different from what we find in the true Gospels and corresponds to traditions which Muhammad had followed in his Koran.[1]

To begin with, this Gospel does not differ in material particulars with the Canonical Gospels, or as Sale would have it, the true Gospels. When Sale was challenged to produce this Gospel in Arabic, he was forced to confess :

> I had not seen it (the Gospel of St. Barnabas), when the little I said of it in the Preliminary Discourse. And the other extracts I *had borrowed* from M. de la Monnoye and M. Toland.[2]

Sale's knowledge, then, of the "Arabic" Gospel of St. Barnabas was after all second-hand and based on the publications of M. de la Monnoye (1716) and M. Toland (1718). These two gentlemen had never seen an Arabic copy. They had only heard of it; and, doubting the correctness of this false rumour, had themselves initiated the series of challenges to the Muslim world to produce the Gospel in Arabic. In fact no such Arabic Gospel of St. Barnabas existed and the rumour was without foundation or justification. With the confession of Sale, the authority for the existence of any Arabic original melts away into the baseless conjectures from which it arose. Unless the original copy which was rejected by the Gelasian Council is produced, or in the absence of proof that the present copy is different from the copy of the Gospel which was recovered from the tomb of St. Barnabas, the Gospel in its present form must be accepted.

But why was this wicked suggestion made by Sale, and why did he attribute the origin of this Gospel to Muslims? And why was this Gospel rejected by the Church? The reason is not far to seek. It must have contained something very unpalatable to them both. I will quote *verbatim* two verses from it, which explain both its condemnation and Sale's effort to deny its authenticity. It records a saying of Jesus :

> Verily, I say unto you that the *Messenger of God* is a splendour that shall give gladness to nearly all that God hath made, for he is adorned with the Spirit of understanding and of counsel, the Spirit of wisdom and might, the Spirit of forbearing and love, the Spirit of prudence and temperance, he is adorned with the Spirit of charity and mercy, the Spirit of justice and piety, the Spirit of gentleness and patience, which he hath

1 Sale, *The Preliminary Discourse to the Translation of the Koran*, [illegible].
2 [illegible], [illegible] to the Reader, IX.

received from God, three times more than He hath given to all His Creatures. O Blessed time, when he shall come to the world! Believe me that I have seen him, and have done him reverence, even as every prophet hath seen and done; seeing that His Spirit God giveth to them prophets. And when I saw him, my soul was filled with consolation, saying "*O Muhammad! God be with thee*, and may He make me worthy to untie thy shoe latchets, for obtaining this I shall be a great prophet and *Holy one of God.* And having said this Jesus rendered his thanks to God.[1]

I will quote another incident recorded in this Gospel:

Jesus went into the wilderness beyond Jordan with his disciples, and when the midday prayer was done, he sat near a palm-tree, and under the shadow of the palm-tree sat his disciples.

Then sayeth Jesus: So secret is predestination, brethren, that verily I say unto you, to none save one shall it be clearly manifest. He it is whom the nations look for, to whom the secrets of God are so manifest that, when he cometh, into the world, blessed shall they be that shall listen to his words, because God shall overshadow them with His Mercy, even as this palm-tree doth overshadow us.

The disciples asked: O Master! Who shall that man be of whom thou speaketh, who shall come into the world?

Jesus answered: He is Muhammad, the Messenger of God.[2]

The presence of the name *Muhammad* is really explained by the Aramaic equivalent, *Mauhamana*, or the Greek word *Paraclete*, which John uses in his Gospel. Jesus had, therefore, foretold the future advent of the Paraclete, *i.e.*, *Mauhamana* or *Muhammad, the Messenger of God.*

The importance of these passages in this Gospel becomes apparent when we recall that the Gospel was recovered and condemned some three or four centuries before the Holy Prophet was born or had proclaimed his Divine Mission. No wonder the Church condemned it as heretical and Sale felt uneasy about these passages and had to set his mind at rest by concocting a lie; even though his disgraceful attempt did not deride, but rather enhanced the testimony of this Gospel.

Was the Holy Prophet Muhammad the Comforter foretold by Jesus? The Holy Qur-'an says:

Those who follow the Apostle Prophet, the *ummi*, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel . . . and follow the light which has been sent down to them, these are the successful.[3]

The Gospels also contain passages which can be construed as foretelling the advent of *that Prophet.* The parable of the owner of the vineyard,[4] coming after the son (*i.e.*, Jesus), who is maltreated, contains a clear indication.

The Comforter foretold by Jesus had to be "the Spirit of Truth" who was to glorify Jesus.[5]

1 *The* [illegible], CLXIII: 180. The translation is by [illegible]
2 *Ibid.*
3 The Holy Qur-'an, VII: 157.
4 Matt., XXI: 33-44; Mark, XII: 1-11; Luke, XX: 9, 18.
5 John, XVI: 12-14.

The Holy Qur-'an refers to Muhammad as the Truth,[1] and with a Muslim it is an Article of Faith that he should believe in all the prophets of God preceding Muhammad, and in their revelation.[2] The Holy Prophet *did glorify* Jesus by denouncing as utterly false all those calumnies which were levelled by Jews against Jesus and his mother Mary. Referring to the allegations of the Jewish Talmudists against Jesus and Mary, Dummelow says:

> It is interesting to notice that Mohamed indignantly refuted these Jewish calumnies.[3]

The Holy Qur-'an was revealed to clarify and confirm the truth of the earlier revealed Books of God[4] and to affirm that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was *that Prophet* who had also been mentioned by Jesus. Says the Holy Qur-'an:

> And when Jesus son of Mary said, O children of Israel! Surely I am the Apostle of Allah to you! Verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of the Apostle who will come after me, his name being *Ahmad*, but when he came to them with clear arguments they said: It is clear enchantment.[5]

I have already mentioned that *Ahmad* is only another name of the Holy Prophet. It is a significant fact that when the New Testament was translated into Arabic the Christians themselves translated the word *Paraclete* as *Ahmad*. Of course, when Sale in 1826, was deputed to revise and correct the Arabic translation of the Bible, the translation of this word was changed.

Jesus is reported to have said:

> *As long as I am in the world* I am the light of the world.[6]

By this Jesus clearly meant that after his death, he would cease to enlighten the world. It also suggests, if we read it with the prophecy about the *Paraclete*, that the *Paraclete* would bring the light of truth into the world, and the Holy Qur-'an asserts that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the light.[7]

It may now be said with certainty that Jesus, who had come as a prophet of God for the house of Jacob in general, and for the Lost Tribes of Israel in particular, having prophesied the approach of the Kingdom of God and the future advent of the Comforter, the Paraclete, Muhammad, or Ahmad, the Praised, left for far-off lands to give the same Gospel (good news) to the Lost Tribes of Israel.

Thus Jesus, the Prophet of God, fulfilled and achieved all the three objects for which he was sent to this world. May the Almighty be pleased and bless His servant, *'Isa*, the son of Mary. ***Ameen*** !

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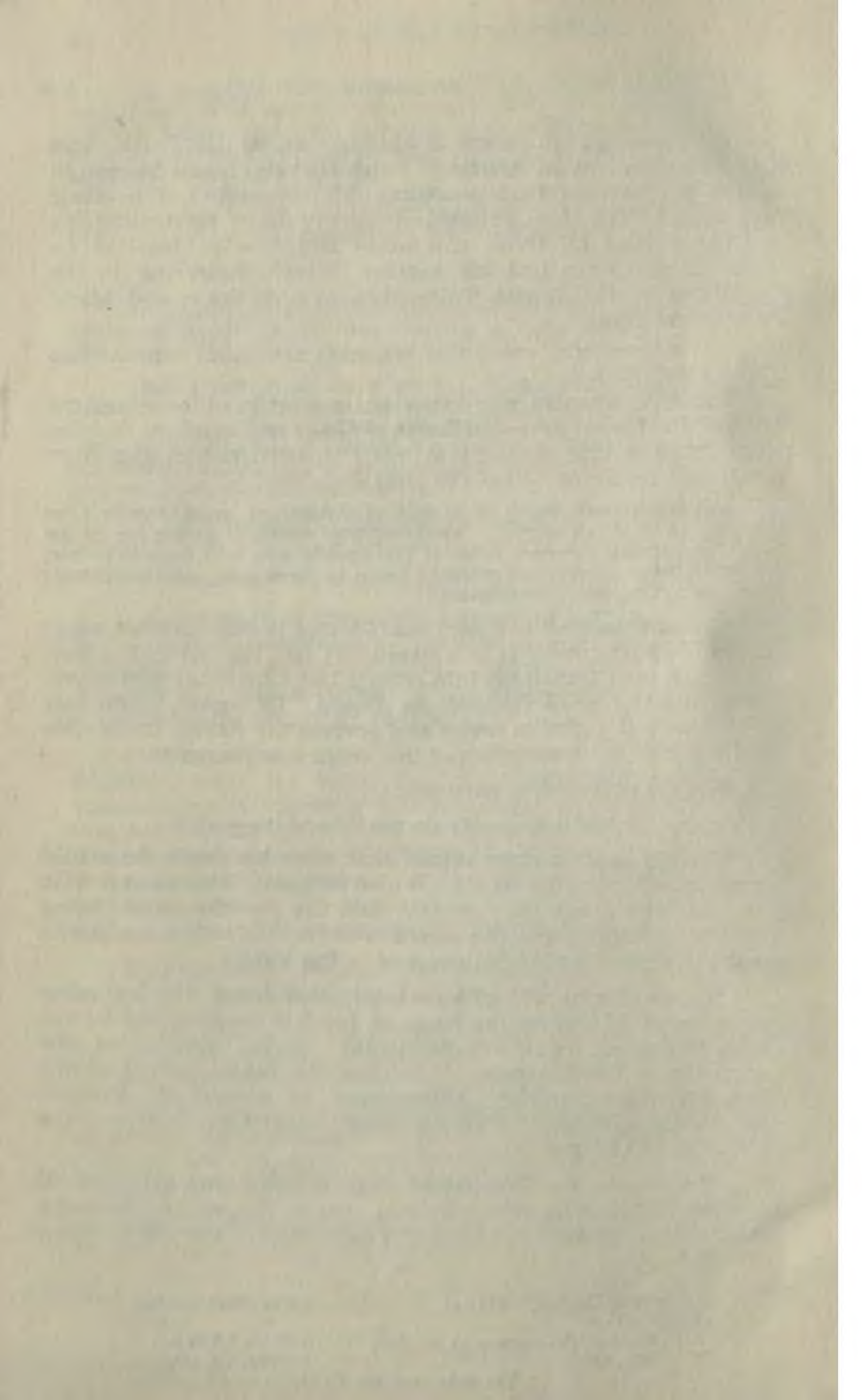
1 The Holy Qur-'an, XVII: 81.
2 *Ibid.*, II: 4
3 Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 658.
4 The Holy Qur-'an, II: 97; V: 15.
5 *Ibid.*, LXI: 6.
6 John, IX: 5.
7 The Holy Qur-'an, V: 15.

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